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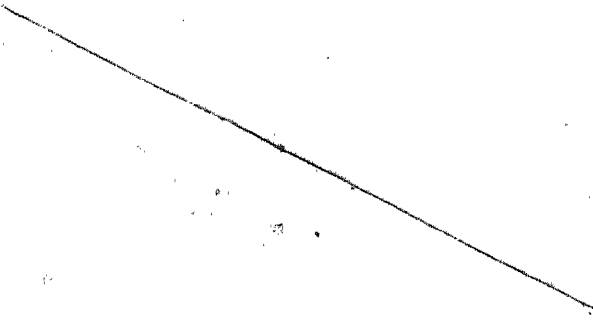

ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS

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SULTAN MAHMUD OF GHAZNIN

A STUDY

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BY

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1927

To

A. B. A. HALEEM,

A

Friend and Colleague.

PREFACE

The study here presented to the public tries to investigate one of the most stormy periods of our mediæval history. As king and as conqueror, Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin will always attract the attention of a posterity, which has been so profoundly influenced by his work, and it is but natural that the most divergent views of his character should prevail. I am not aware that I have been inspired by any sympathy or antipathy towards the great conqueror. But there has *recently* grown up a tendency among some Mussalmans of India to adore Mahmud as a saint, and to such a scientific evaluation of his work and his policy will appear very painful. There is only one thing I need say in my defence. Islam as a creed stands by the principles of the *Quran* and the 'Life' of the Apostle. If Sultan Mahmud and his officers strayed from the 'straight path'—so much the worse for them. We want no idols.

MOHAMMAD HABIB.

Muslim University, Aligarh.
March 24th, 1927.

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CHAPTER I

THE MUSLIM WORLD IN THE TENTH CENTURY

"Almost all ethical doctrines and religious creeds," says John Stuart Mill, "are full of meaning and vitality to those who originate them and to the direct disciples of the originators. Their meaning continues to be felt in undiminished strength, and is perhaps brought out into fuller consciousness, so long as the struggle lasts to give the doctrine or creed an ascendency over other creeds. At last, it either prevails and becomes the general opinion, or its progress stops; it keeps possession of the ground it has gained, but ceases to spread further. From this time may be usually dated the decline in the living power of the doctrine. For when it has become a hereditary creed, and to be received passively, not actively—when the mind is no longer compelled, in the same degree as at first, to exercise its vital powers on the questions which its beliefs present to it, there is a progressive tendency to forget all of the belief except the formularies, or to give it a dull and torpid assent, as if accepting it on trust dispensed with the necessity of realising it in consciousness."

This weakening of spiritual zeal has shown itself in all religions at various stages, and is painfully obvious in the history of Islam from the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate in the ninth century to the Mongol conquest of Muslim Asia and the growth of mysticism in the thirteenth. It was a period of great achievements in science, literature and art, and the area of human knowledge was enlarged by scholars trained in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. It was a period of feverish political activity; empires were established and pulled down; cities were founded and destroyed. But it was a period of refinement and culture, of an alluring materialistic civilisation—not of faith. The missionary zeal of the earlier Muslims had evaporated in the signal success it had achieved, and the creed that had come into the world for the elevation of the lower classes was being used as a bulwark for the protection of vested interests and the continuation of time-honoured abuses. Of a hair-splitting theology there was enough and to spare; and the sectarian fanaticism which such theology excited discolours the annals of many generations, during which 'orthodox' and 'heretic' persecuted and tortured each other with an inhumanity they never displayed in their dealings with the non-Muslims, who were regarded as the honourable opponents in an honourable war. Islam had become a matter of custom and tradition and a means for procuring the salvation of the individual soul. It was no longer a world-wide force of democratic upheaval. People prayed and fasted and read the *Quran* with devotion; they lived according to what they considered to be the true interpretation of

the law; but the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, such as had inspired the Saracenic invaders of Persia, was totally beyond their ken. They had lost their proselytising fervour and were content to keep their creed to themselves. The boundaries of the Muslim world remained where the Omayyad Caliphs had left them, and no new countries or peoples were brought within the fold. And internally also the political, religious and racial unity of the Muslim world was being gradually undermined by the forces of disintegration.

The idea that all purely Muslim populations should be under the suzerainty of the Caliph had never been absent from Muslim consciousness. Nevertheless, the lands of the Caliphate were too extensive to be governed from a single centre, and in the course of the last two centuries the political and administrative power of the Caliph had gradually declined. Local princes raised their heads and the orders of Baghdad ceased to command the implicit obedience that had been yielded to them in the good old days of Harunur Rashid. Spain had become independent; an anti-Caliphate had been founded by the Fatimids of Egypt; and nearer home the growth of a number of 'minor dynasties' paralysed the Caliph's power in Iraq, Persia and Turkestan. Yet the moral prestige of the Caliph in the eyes of his co-religionists was immense. He was the successor of the Prophet and public sentiment regarded him with deep respect. He was the fountain-head of all political authority; kings and tribal chiefs were in theory subordinate to him,

and his sanction alone could provide a legal basis for their power. The maddest of political adventurers would think many times before he directly defied the Caliph's authority.

Of the 'minor dynasties' that jostled each other in Persia and Turkestan the most important and powerful was the House of Saman founded by Amir Ismail Samani in 911 A.D. The Samanids, with their capital at Bokhara, held an insecure sway over Trans-Oxonia (*Mawaraun Nahr*) and Khorasan, their power being almost constantly defied by rebellious governors and insubordinate officials. Beyond the Jaxartes the unconverted Turks and Tatars were ruled by their tribal chiefs, the most powerful of whom was the Khan of Kashghar. In Eastern Persia the Shiaite dynasty of Buwaih, with its capital at Ray, was founded by Ruknuddoulah Daylami in 933 and gradually expanded its power in Iraq till even Baghdad came within its grasp. The Caliph was left to slumber in his palace, 'a venerable phantom,' while the Buwaihid rulers assumed the power and the title of 'Commander-in-Chief' and directed the secular affairs of the capital. The other dynasties are too many and too unimportant to be mentioned here. They were constantly at war with each other.

As if this division of political power was not enough to paralyse the energies of the 'Faithful,' acute differences on questions of dogma also appeared with an intensity of bitterness which Mussalmans now living can hardly realise. The division of Mussalmans into Sunnis and Shias had come very early.

The Shias claimed that the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, should have been his immediate successor, while the Sunnis upheld the legality of the actual order of succession—Abu Bakr, Omar, Usman and Ali. But this political difference slowly developed into difference of a more fundamental nature; and Shiaism became the Persian interpretation, as against Sunnism or the Arab interpretation, of the Prophet's teachings.(1) As yet, however, the difference between the

(1) The point requires some elucidation. The great religions of the world may be divided into two classes—the Semitic (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and the Aryan (Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism). Broadly speaking, Semitic religions give more importance to the ethical, and the Aryan religions to the metaphysical, aspect of faith. Now after the Arab conquest of Persia, the Persians naturally interpreted the new faith in the light of their already existing metaphysical conceptions which they largely shared with the Hindus. One of the most important of these was the idea of Incarnation, the appearance of the Supreme Being in a human form. Every religion has felt the necessity of finding some means of intercourse between the real and the sensible world. In Islam the angel Gabriel brings the message of the one world to the other. Aryan religions explain it by a series of incarnations by which the Creator comes to teach the law to the created. In the extreme forms of Shiaism, a highly Aryanised interpretation of Islam, the Prophets and the Imams become [illegible], a belief which the orthodox considered to be identical with idolatry. And yet *a priori* Shiaism and Sunnism must be considered equally valid interpretations of a common faith; nor is it possible to give any valid reason why the Arab outlook on life should be in greater consonance with Reality than the Persian. Another Indo-Aryan doctrine was 'Monism'—the belief which regarded all existence as the emanation of one Being and all change as the evidence of a Cosmic Purpose. To the Semitic conception of law as an external command, the Aryans had opposed the belief that law was an inner aspiration of the soul itself. What is known as *Tasawwuf* (Muslim mysticism) is Islam interpreted in the light of Indo-Persian Monism, in which God ceases

Sunnis and the main body of Shias was not so acute as it afterwards became; one sect shaded off into another by insensible gradations; it was difficult to say where Sunnism ended and Shiaism began, and many persons then living would have found it hard to decide to which sect they really belonged. But the most bitter animosity prevailed between the 'orthodox' Sunnis and the extreme wing of the Shiaites, who believed in only 'seven' out of the 'twelve' Imams of Shiaism, and were generally known as the 'heretics' (*mulahidah*). This extreme wing, though divided into many groups, of whom the Ismailis of Arabia and the Carmathians of Multan were most notorious, was unified by a common hatred of the Sunnis owing to the punishment which the latter inflicted on 'heretics' in general, without trying to distinguish between one kind of heresy and another. Their great dogmatic fault, from the orthodox

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to be a Being external to the individual and law is no longer a command imposed from without. Muslim mystics have always claimed that their doctrines are based on the *Quran* and rightly so, however unpalatable such a confession may appear to those who imagine that a religion can long exist without developing a system of metaphysics. But the contention of the Muslim mystics is quite compatible with the fact that the development of mystisicm in Islam was the work of Persian thinkers, who were steeped in the doctrine of Monism; and that in its mature form the teachings of *Tasawwuf* are broadly the same as the philosophy of the Neo-Platonists and the Upanishads. Thus, Islam interpreted in the light of the Incarnation-idea has given us Shiaism, which in its orthodox form claims that Ali should have been the first Caliph and in its heretical phase asserts him and the Imams to be Divine Incarnations, while interpreted in the light of Aryan Monism, it has led to *Tasawwuf*, the finest achievement of Indo-Persian genius in the realm of thought.

view-point, was their belief in the Prophet's Family as a Divine Incarnation. But every species of vice was attributed to them; and it was their supposed moral character rather than their actual religious beliefs that excited the frantic intolerance of the orthodox. They were accused of permitting incest and of legalising marriages within prohibited degrees; they were blamed, and with more truth, for resorting to assassination as a political weapon and of trying to establish a heretical hierarchy in place of the secular state. A 'heretic' was slain wherever he was found; but simple death, as a rule, was considered too mild a punishment, and the 'heretic,' who escaped being torn to pieces by infuriated mobs, was put to death by the governments with the most revolting tortures that the mind of man could invent. To this insensate persecution the 'heretics' replied with the weapons which are always in the hands of a determined minority. They formed secret societies which could not be unearthed by the clumsy spy-system of the state, and their propagandists (*da'i*) in various disguises penetrated into every corner of the Muslim world. Growing yet bolder they established the 'anti-Caliphate' of Egypt, captured the Holy Places and removed the Black Stone from the sacred temple of Mecca. Finally, they seized a number of forts in Persia, the chief of which was Alamut, developed murder into a fine art, and Sunni kings, statesmen and theologians were kept in a perpetual fear of death by the unseen dagger of the assassinating 'heretic.' It was a mad dance; but none the less it continued till the middle of the thirteenth century when

'orthodox' and 'heretic' alike were compelled to lick the dust under the Mongol conqueror's iron heel.(2)

"And this is my last advice unto you," the Prophet said in his last speech at Mecca, "Ye are of one brotherhood." And there is no social principle of their faith to which the Mussalmans have been more true; religious unity has always overridden all tribal and racial distinctions. Nevertheless there have been avowed, though futile, attempts at racial supremacy; in Muslim lands, as elsewhere, racial pride has been an uncomfortable aspect of human nature. The Omayyad Caliphs made a bold attempt to convert the Empire into a heritage of the Arab aristocracy; the

(2) A detailed study of the Carmathians and Ismailis does not come within our scope. Their ideals and their organisation are equally interesting. Like all revolutionary minorities they seem to have included men of all shades of opinion from tolerant philosophers like Hakim Nasir Khusrau to mere cut-throats and assassins. Nizamul Mulk, in his *'Siyasat Namah,'* considers them a pre-Muslim Persian sect, founded by Mazdak a generation before the Prophet, and continued into Islam. A mysterious charm surrounds the fortress of Alamut (eagle's nest) and its 'mock paradise,' from whence the 'Old Man of the Mountains' was wont to send out his young men to assassinate his opponents. The word 'assassin' comes from *hashish* (hemp) with which the victim of the fraud was drugged before being taken to the 'paradise'; its *houris,* it is said, had such an influence on his imagination that his soul found no rest in the world outside, and the promise that he would reach 'paradise' at once by the performance of a heroic deed was enough to induce him to wield the assassin's knife and face the inevitable punishment at the hands of the orthodox. The fort was destroyed by Halaku, grandson of Chengiz. For literature on the subject, besides the *'Siyasat Namah,'* see the chapters on the 'heretics' in *'Rauzatus Safa'* and *'Tarikh-i-Guzidah.'* The third volume of Alauddin Ata Malik Juwaini's *'Tarikh-i-Jahan Gusha,'* was written on the basis of the Alamut library. It has not yet been published.

Persian Revolution, which overthrew the Omayyads and placed the Abbasids on the throne of the Caliphate, naturally brought the Arab *regime* to an end and transferred to the Persians the superiority formerly enjoyed by the Arabs. But a rival race soon appeared to contest the prize with the victorious Persians. From the marshes of Anatolia in the west to the shores of the Pacific Ocean in the east, there extended various tribes of the Mongolian race—Turks, Tatars, Turkomans, Tibetans, Chinese and Mongols —distinguished by some very marked common features. They had allied scripts—all writing from top to bottom. They were short of stature, with high cheek-bones and small eyes, but remarkably well-built and inured to the hardships of war. With the expansion of the Muslim frontier to the north and west of Persia, one Turkish tribe after another was brought within the Islamic pale, and the Turks surprised their conquerors by the remarkable courage of their men and the no less remarkable beauty of their women. Turkish body-guards were appointed to watch over the safety of kings, Turkish slave-girls intrigued in royal *harems;* and slowly, but surely, Turkish adventurers shouldered out the Persians from all places of military command. By the middle of the tenth century the revolution was complete, and the Turks had taken up among the Mussalmans a position broadly similar to that of the Kshattriyas among the Hindus. That only a Turk should rule a Muslim land or lead its armies on the field of battle was considered by the ordinary citizen an immutable precept of political morality. Of the dynasties that have ruled Muslim

and feet of many others. Daud ended his life as a prisoner in a Ghorian fort.

(9) In 1011-1012 Mahmud, who had heard that Thaneswar, owing to its idol, Cakrasvamin, was as holy in the eyes of the Hindus as Mecca in the eyes of the Mussalmans, marched thither for the treasures a place so ancient was sure to possess.[14] Anandpal in consonance with the treaty provided all the 'requisites of hospitality' by ordering his merchants and shopkeepers to look after the needs of the commissariat and his brother accompanied the Sultan with two thousand men. Mahmud refrained from injuring the Rai's[15] territory but refused to accept his suggestion that an indemnity and a yearly tribute should be taken from the people of Thaneswar, because 'my royal wish is to remove the practice of idolatry totally from all the lands of Hindustan.' Too late in the day the Rai of Thaneswar reflected on the necessity of an Indian Confederacy. "If we do not raise a dam to keep off this deluge," he wrote to his brother Rais, "it will soon spread over the whole plain and submerge all kingdoms, great and small." This was true enough. But Mahmud reached Thaneswar before the

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(14) Utbi places the Thaneswar campaign after the Nardin (Ninduna) expedition, and Elliot follows him in the error. This is clearly wrong. The Thaneswar campaign was undertaken during the life of Anandpal; consequently the Ninduna campaign which was directed against his son, Trilocanpal, could not have preceded it. Feristha adheres to the correct order.

(15) The *Cakrasvamin* was a bronze image of Vishnu, which held the weapon, *Cakra,* in one of its hands. It was taken to Ghaznin a d thrown into the hippodrome of the city. (*Alberuni.*)

clumsy machinery of the Confederation could stir and the Rai fled in despair. Mahmud collected the treasures and broke the idols of the undefended city at leisure. He wished to march further east, but as such a movement would have left him entirely at Anandpal's mercy, he accepted the advice of his officers and turned back with a fabulous number of 'servants and slaves.' Mahmud's army, like the army of most Asiatic conquerors, was essentially a cosmopolitan institution, kept intact by its *esprit de corps* and loyalty to its master's person. Mahmud took good military men into his service wherever he found them. Indians, who were mostly non-Muslims, were freely enrolled, and at a later stage were formed into a separate regiment commanded by a Hindu general, who enjoyed a very high status among his fellow officers.

In 1012-1013 Mahmud's officers conquered Gharjistan, and the Sultan compelled the Caliph, Al Qadir Billah, to hand over to him the districts of Khorasan which were still in his hands. But the Caliph stoutly refused Mahmud's further demand that he should be given Samarkand also. "I will do no such thing," he replied, "and if you take possession of Samarkand without my permission, I will disgrace you before the whole world." Mahmud was furious. "Do you wish me to come to the capital of the Caliphate with a thousand elephants," he threatened the Caliph's ambassador, "in order to lay it waste and bring its earth on the backs of my elephants to Ghaznin?" But the policy of plundering the centres of Muslim and Hindu civilisation simultaneously was

too bold even for Mahmud, and he had to apologise humbly to the power which even in its hour of weakness could have shattered the moral foundations of the Ghaznavide Kingdom. But none the less he established his power over Samarkand.

(10) Meanwhile Anandpal's death had upset Mahmud's calculations in India. The new Rai, Trilocanpal, was personally well inclined towards the Mussalmans, but he seems to have been a weak man and the direction of affairs came into the hands of his son, known to contemporaries as the 'Nidar' (Fearless) Bhim, who stoutly reversed the policy of his grandfather and put an end to the Ghaznavide alliance. Mahmud was once more forced to fight the kingdom of Lahore in order to keep the road to Hindustan open. He started from Ghaznin in the autumn of 1013 but snow began to fall before he reached the Indian frontier, and it was found necessary to go into winter quarters. With the spring the Ghaznavides moved forward once more, 'ascending the hills like mountain-goats and descending them like torrents of water.' Nidar Bhim fortified himself in the Margala Pass,[16] which was narrow, precipitous and steep, but on the arrival of his vassals he came down and offered battle. The Ghaznavides

(16) "The action which preceded the capture of Nin-duna appears to have been fought at the Margala Pass, which answers well to the description given of it by Utbi. The hill of Balanath is a conspicuous mountain overhanging the Jhelum and now generally called Tilla, which means a hill. It is still occasionally called Balanath, and there is a famous *yogi* establishment on its highest summit, of great repute and resorted to by members of that fraternity from the most distant parts of India." (*E & D.*)

won after a severe contest. Bhim threw a garrison into the fort of Ninduna on the hill of Balanath and fled to the Pass of Kashmir. Mahmud, who now seems to have made up his mind to annex the Punjab, reduced Ninduna and after placing a garrison in it, pushed on in pursuit of Bhim. But the elusive hero could not be captured and the Sultan turned back from the foot of the Kashmir hills.

(11) Next year (1015-1016) the Sultan again attempted to force his way through the Kashmir Pass. But the fortress of Lohkot defied all his efforts. Reinforcements reached the garrison from Kashmir; snow began to fall; and for the first time Mahmud retired discomfited from before an Indian fort. While retreating he lost a large number of his men in the floods of the Jhelum, extricated himself with difficulty from the watery peril, and returned to Ghaznin without having achieved anything.'

This failure in the east was compensated by an acquisition in the west. Mahmud's sister had been married to Abul Abbas Mamun, the ruler of Khwarazm. But the bride had hardly been in her new home for a year when Abul Abbas was slain by rebels. Mahmud marched forth to revenge his brother-in-law's death, defeated the rebel army before the famous fortress of Hazar Asp and appointed his general, Altuntash, governor of the newly conquered territory with the title of 'Khwarazm Shah.'

(12) Towards the end of the rainy season, 1018, Mahmud at last started for that expedition to the Trans-Gangetic plain of which he had been dreaming

for years. His regular army of one hundred thousand was strengthened by twenty thousand volunteers from Khorasan and Turkestan. The omens were favourable. The Hindu Confederacy had disappeared and none of the Rais was strong enough to oppose Mahmud single-handed. He had established a reputation for generalship which none could question and everyone knew that his methods were thorough. Trilocanpal and Nidar Bhim, though still eluding their pursuers, were driven beyond the Punjab, while Sali, Rai of Kashmir, made peace with the Sultan and led the van of the invading troops. The Ghaznavides marched through forests in which 'even winds lose their way,' forded the five rivers of the Punjab, and crossing the Jamna on December 2nd, moved against Barran (Bulandshahr) 'like the waves of the sea.' But Rai Hardat solved the problem by coming out of his city with ten thousand men, who either from policy or conviction, proclaimed 'their anxiety for conversion and their rejection of idols.'(17) The conversion saved the citizens and Mahmud marched down the Jamna to Mahaban. Its ruler, Rai Kulchand, who had established a reputation for invincibility in local warfare, drew up his army in the midst of a thick forest. But Mahmud penetrated the forest 'like a comb through a head of hair' and scattered the Mahaban army. Many of the fugitives were drowned in the attempt

(17) Nizamuddin and Ferishta by mistake attribute the conversion to the Rai of Kannauj, which they also describe as the first city attacked by Mahmud. They have also confused the line of Mahmud's march and make him cross and recross the Jamna many times over. I have followed Utbi's contemporary account which is free from the geographical blunders of later writers.

to cross the Jamna, and the valiant Kulchand escaped the disgrace of captivity by slaying his wife and son and then plunging the dagger into his own breast.

On the other side of the Jamna lay the ancient and famous city of Mathura, the birth-place of Krishna-Basdeo. 'The wall of the city was constructed of hard stone, and two gates, which opened upon the river flowing under the city, were erected on strong and lofty foundations, to protect them against he floods of the river and rains. On both sides of the city there were a thousand houses, to which idol temples were attached, all strengthened from top to bottom by rivets of iron, and all made of masonry work, and opposite to them were other buildings, supported on broad wooden pillars to give them strength. In the middle of the city there was a temple larger and firmer than the rest, which can neither be described nor painted; the inhabitants said it had been built not by men but by genii.' 'In population and splendid edifices the city of Mathura was unrivalled; human tongue cannot describe the wonderful things it contained.'

But no attempt was made to defend the inimitable monuments of Hindu art when Mahmud crossed the Jamna, and the inhabitants, anxious to save their skins, left him to work havoc with their sacred inheritance. "The Sultan gave orders that all the temples should be burnt with naphtha and fire and levelled with the ground." Envy rather than fanaticism seems to have been the predominant motive in Mahmud's artistic mind. "In this city," he wrote to the nobles of Ghaznin in praise of what his vandalism

had destroyed, "there are a thousand towering palaces, most of them constructed of huge stones. The temples are more than can be counted. Anyone wishing to construct the like will have to spend a hundred thousand thousand *dinars* and employ the best skilled workmen for two hundred years." As a financial venture the expedition succeeded beyond all expectation—98,300 *misqals* of gold were obtained from idols of that metal; the silver idols, two hundred in number, could not be weighed 'without being broken and put into scales'; two rubies valued at 5,000 *dinars,* a sapphire weighing 450 *misqals,* and in addition such other spoils as a rich and prosperous city could not fail to yield. A few miles from Mathura is the historic town of Brindaban where seven proud forts raised their heads to the sky by the river side. The owner of the forts fled at Mahmud's approach and he took from them all they contained.(18)

The Sultan then left behind him the greater part of his army, which was too large for the rapid movements he desired, and proceeded against Kannauj with his best veterans. The ancient city had risen to prominence as the capital of Harsha Vardhana; it was

(18) The situation of Mathura by the side of the Jamna is charming beyond description, and walking by the river side on a summer evening under the guidance of its leading citizen, Pandit Radha Krishna, I could just have a dream of what the place might have been in the days of its glory. The road to Brindaban, so famous in the legend of Lord Krishna, still retains its poetic associations. Even to-day a visitor, with eyes that can see, will find much to captivate him in the work of later artists—and the landscape is as beautiful as it was in the days of the Mahabharata.

defended by seven forts washed by the Ganges and contained about ten thousand temples, great and small. The Rais of Kannauj had not been slow in helping Jaipal and Anandpal against the aggression of Ghaznin, but the reigning prince, Rajyapala,[19] fled away on Mahmud's approach. Most of the citizens followed the example of their Rai and Kannauj repeated the story of Mathura. Mahmud captured the seven forts in a single day and plundered the undefended city. Further down the Ganges, near the modern Fatehpur, was Rai Chandal Bhor's fort of Asni. Chandal Bhor, who had been busy in fighting the Rai of Kannauj, also fled and Asni was plundered. Then proceeding southwards Mahmud came across the fort of Munj[20] (Mujhavan), the garrison of which, 'independent as head-strong camels,' fought like 'obstinate satans,' and, when all hope had disappeared,

(19) Utbi calls him Rai Jaipal which is equivalent to Rajyapala, but he is not to be identified with the Rai Jaipal of Lahore who had been dead for years. But further on Utbi speaks of Pur-i Jaipal's war with Chand Rai. Pur-i Jaipal is not Anandpal but Trilocanpal, whom Alberuni calls 'Tarojanpal' for which Pur-i Jaipal (Jaipal's son) is a natural misreading. Much confusion has, however, been caused by later historians. Ferishta gives the name of Korah to the Rai of Kannauj. V. A. Smith transfers the name of Trilocanpal to Rajyapala's son. It is useless to mention what mess of names and places other scholars have been responsible for. But the list of the Hindu Shahi dynasty given by Alberuni, and enumerated in a foregoing note (Note 5 on Page 13) settles the question definitely. The other difficulties will be removed if the Puri-i Jaipal of Utbi is read as Trilocanpal, and not as Jaipal's son.

(20) Utbi calls Munj 'the fort of Brahmans' and places it before the capture of Asni. This seems highly improbable as Mahmud would come across the fort while marching against Sharwa. Utbi would seem to take him to Bundelkhand twice

threw the women and children into the fire and died fighting to the last man. The next objective was Chand Rai of Sharwa,[21] who had been harassing the unfortunate Trilocanpal of Lahore in the east while Mahmud was pressing him so hard on the other side. To prevent the suicidal strife, Trilocanpal had even sought his enemy's daughter in marriage for his son, but 'Nidar' Bhim was imprisoned by his father-in-law when he went to bring his bride and the strife continued. As Mahmud marched eastwards, Trilocanpal fled before him and found a refuge with Chandal Bhor of Asni. Common misfortune at last created some sympathy between the dynasties of Lahore and Sharwa, and 'Nidar' Bhim, who seems to have regained his freedom, sent Chand Rai a piece of friendly advice. "Sultan Mahmud is not like the rulers of Hind. He is not a leader of black men. Armies fly away before the very name of him and his father. I regard his bridle as much stronger than yours, for he never contents himself with one blow of the sword, nor does his army content itself with one hill out of a whole range. If you wish for your own safety, you will remain in concealment." The suggestion was adopted. Chand Rai fled to the hills with his elephants and treasures. But Mahmud captured Sharwa and then hastened after the flying Rai, whom he managed to discover and defeat on the night of January 6, 1019. The campaign beyond Kannauj had not taken more than seventeen days

(21) Either Seunra on the Ken between Kalanjar and Banda, or Sriwagarh on the Pahonj, not far from Kunch. (*E & D, Vol. ii, p. 659.*)

when Mahmud turned back with Chand Rai's much coveted elephants.

Mahmud's exploit could not fail to captivate the imagination of his co-religionists. Neither Alexander, the Great, nor the heroes of the *Shah Namah* had anything so romantic to their credit. A mysterious wonder-land had been explored. Beyond the thick and impenetrable frontier forest, beyond the five great rivers of the Punjab, the Muizzin's call to prayer had resounded over many a desolate wilderness and amidst the conflagrations of many a hamlet and town. The success was duly celebrated. The Caliph summoned a special durbar to receive Mahmud's message of victory. Accounts of the expedition were read out from the pulpits and pious Mussalmans fondly imagined that 'what the Companions of the Blessed Prophet had done in Arabia, Persia, Syria and Iraq, Mahmud has achieved in Hindustan.' Nothing could be farther from the truth. He had rolled in immense riches but had only disgusted the Indians with his faith. The plundered people were not likely to think well of Islam when it came to them in the shape of the Ghaznavide conqueror and left behind it an everlasting story of plundered temples, desolated cities and trampled crops. As a faith Islam had been morally disgraced, not elevated, by the Ghaznavide's achievement. The booty amounted to 3,000,000 *dirhams*. "The number of prisoners may be conceived from the fact that each was sold from two to three *dirhams*. These were afterwards taken to Ghaznin and merchants came from distant cities to purchase them, so that

the countries of Mawaraun Nahr, Iraq and Khorasan were filled with them, and the fair and the dark, the rich and the poor, were commingled in one common slavery.' It was perhaps the remembrance of Mathura which led Mahmud to build a Juma mosque and a college in Ghaznin after his return. The *amirs* followed his example and Ghaznin was soon adorned with palatial buildings.

(13) Two distant storm-centres still troubled Mahmud's mind. Trilocanpal and his son, 'Nidar' Bhim, had been defeated but not crushed and were still in the Doab. In Bundelkhand Rai Nanda[22] of Kalanjar had also adopted a hostile attitude. After Mahmud's withdrawal from the country he had marched with the Rai of Gwalior against Rajyapala, and either as a punishment for the latter's cowardly attitude towards Mahmud, or on account of some other forgotten grievance, put him to death. An alliance between Trilocanpal and Nanda was natural. But it was not Mahmud's principle to let the grass grow under his feet. He determined to prevent the possibility of another Hindu Confederacy, and in the winter of 1019-20 again crossed 'the five and the two' rivers. Trilocanpal withdrew beyond the lower Rahib (Ramganga) but Mahmud's officers forced their passage across the river by swimming on inflated skins (*mashaks*), and after scattering Trilocanpal's army plundered the newly built town of Bari,[23] which

(22) V. A. Smith calls him 'Ganda.'

(23) "Kanoj lies to the west of the Ganges, a very large town, but most of it is now in ruins since the capital has been transferred thence to the city of Bari, east of the Ganges. Between the two towns is a distance of three to

Rajyapala had built after the destruction of Kannauj. Whether to help Trilocanpal, or with the intention of fighting the invader single-handed, Nanda had already started from Kalanjar with 36,000 horse, 40,000 or 50,000 foot and 640 elephants. The Sultan also moved forward. It is difficult to say where the two met, but on surveying the enemy troops from an eminence, the Sultan regretted the dangerous expedition he had undertaken. The Rai was even more afraid, for that very night a great terror took possession of his mind and he left all his baggage and fled. Mahmud, after making sure that the Hindus had not attempted an ambush, plundered the deserted camp. Five hundred and eighty elephants, in addition to the two hundred and seventy obtained from Trilocanpal, fell into his hands. But the Punjab was still unsubdued. Mahmud's position in a far off territory with the armies of Nanda yet undefeated was extremely critical, and afraid lest his retreat should be cut off, he marched back rapidly to Ghaznin.

(14) The conquest of India was not Mahmud's aim. Nevertheless, the Doab campaigns had brought him far from his base, and he saw that if his armies were to penetrate to such distant territories as Bundelkhand, he must at least have the Punjab under his complete control. In 1021 he started from Ghaznin

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four days' marches." (*Alberuni, Vol. i, p. 199.*) The battle must have taken place not far from where the Ramganga falls into the Ganges. V. A. Smith's identification of the prince with the son of Rajyapala is a mistake. Utbi's account leaves no doubt that Trilocanpal, son of Anandpal, is meant.

with 'a large number of carpenters, blacksmiths and stone-cutters' with the definite intention of establishing a regular government over the Punjab. The first objective were the frontier tribes of Swat, Bajaur and Kafiristan, who had 'not yet put the yoke of Islam round their neck,' and worshipped the Buddha in the form of the lion (Sakya Sinha). The inhabitants were subdued and converted and a fort was built in their territory.(24) Marching further, Mahmud repeated his former attempt, and tasted again the bitterness of his former failure, at the foot of Lohkot, the impregnable fortress of the Kashmir Pass. But the Punjab was cleared. Mahmud forsook plundering and established a regular administration. A reliable *amir* was placed at Lahore, the rest of the province was assigned to various officers and garrisons were established at important points. Trilocanpal had died soon after the battle of the Rahib. 'Nidar' Bhim fled to the Rai of Ajmere and died in 1026. With him the House of Kallur came to an end. A contemporary Muslim scholar, untouched by the passions and prejudices of those around him, supplied a befitting epitaph to the dynasty that had ended in such a hero: "They were men of nob

(24) The Persian chronicles speak of Qirat and Nardin (or Nur), which Elliot, on the authority of Alberuni, identifies with the Kuner and the Lande rivers that fall into the river Kabul. Doubtless the frontier tribes are meant. Plenty of Buddhist remains survive to explain the worship of lions. (*E & D, Vol. ii, p. 444.*) On breaking a great temple situated there the ornamented figure of a lion came out of it which according to the belief of the Hindus was four thousand years old. (*Ferishta.*) The carpenters, blacksmiths and stone-cutters were brought for the construction of forts at the strategic points on the frontier and in the Punjab.

sentiment and noble bearing. In all their grandeur, they never slackened in the desire of doing what is good and right."(25)

(15) Next year (1022-1023) Mahmud once more marched by way of Lahore against Nanda. But he had taken all that was best from the lands in the direction of his march and was not inclined to push matters to extremes. Gwalior was invested but the Rai obtained peace by a present of thirty-five elephants. Even Nanda, when besieged in Kalanjar, found the Sultan reasonable. A present of three hundred elephants, whom the Rai turned unceremoniously out of the fort for the Turks to 'capture and ride on,' served to create a good will, which was further strengthened by some Hindi verses written by the Rai in the Sultan's praise. All the scholars of Hind, Persia and Arabia present in Mahmud's camp applauded Nanda's composition and Mahmud sent him an order (*firman*) confirming him in the possession of his fifteen forts. Nanda acknowledged the favour by a present of money and costly jewels and the Sultan turned back from the most eastern point he was ever destined to reach.

On returning to Ghaznin the Sultan held a muster of his forces. Apart from the troops stationed in the provinces, the royal army at Ghaznin amounted to 54,000 horse and 1,300 elephants,(26) and with this he crossed the Oxus and proceeded to overawe the chiefs

(25) *Alberuni.*

(26) The total number of elephants possessed by Mahmud is said to have been 2,500.

of Trans-Oxonia. Ali Tigin, the recalcitrant ruler of Samarkand was brought in chains before the Sultan and sent a prisoner to India. The smaller chiefs crowded to offer their allegiance. Even Yusuf Qadr Khan, brother of the late I-lak Khan[27] came to meet him and requested him to transport the Seljuqs across the Oxus into Khorasan. This body of pastoral and barbaric Turkomans, destined to an unexpected but not undeserved greatness, had long been a source of trouble to its neighbours. During the reign of the Samanid kings they had migrated from Turkestan, and crossing the Jaxartes, had settled in Nur of Bukhara from which they used to migrate to Darghan of Khwarazm. Their leader, Israel, son of Seljuq, the chief after whom the tribe came to be named, was a prepetual terror to the *maliks* of Turkestan and Trans-Oxonia. " He was wont to enter the chase or the conflict like a whirlwind and a thunder-cloud and vanquished every one who ventured into a personal contest with him. Not a bird in the air and not a deer in the forest escaped his arrow."[28] Like others he came riding at the head of his Turkomans to offer his allegiance to Mahmud, 'with a cap placed jauntily on one side of his head and bestriding a horse like the spur of a mountain.' The astute Sultan looked sus-

(27) 'I-lak Khan' was the title of the Khans of Kashghar. Mir Khond, Ferishta and Hamdullah Mustawfi greatly differ in their account of Qadr Khan; the *Rahatus Sudur* of Mohammad ibn-i Ali ibn-i Sulaiman Rawandi (edited by Dr. M. Iqbal) calls him I-lak Khan. The question is of the remotest interest to the student of Indian history. It will be remembered that the Caliph had refused to transfer Samarkand to Mahmud.

(28) *Tabaqat-i Nasiri.*

piciously at the ambitious young chief and asked him how many men he could bring to the army. "If you send one of these arrows into our camp," Israel replied, "fifty thousand of your servants will mount on horseback." "And if that number," continued Israel, "be not sufficient, send the second arrow to the horde of Balik (Bilkhan Koh), and you will find fifty thousand more." "But," said the Ghaznavide, dissembling his anxiety, "if I should stand in need of the whole force of your kindred tribes?" "Despatch my bow," was the last reply of Israel, "and as it is circulated around, the summons will be obeyed by two hundred thousand horse."(29) Mahmud made up his mind to crush the Seljuqs before it was too late. An order was served on Israel commanding him to remain within his tent while four thousand Seljuq families with their goods and chattels were transported across the Oxus under the eye of the Ghaznavide army. The Sultan's chamberlin, Arsalan Hajib, suggested that the barbarians should be drowned while crossing the river. "Destiny cannot be averted by perfidy any more than by valour," Mahmud remarked, and refused to break his promise.(30) Israel with his two sons was despatched to the distant fortress of Kalanjar where he died after seven years. The

(29) *Gibbon, Vol. vi.* I have adopted the great historian's version of the famous conversation. *Rahatus Sudur* is more particular: the first arrow would raise 100,000 horse from Israel's own followers, the second arrow 50,000 from the Turkomans settled in Trans-Oxonia, while his bow would bring 200,000 from the Turkomans still in Turkestan.

(30) *Tabaqat-i Nasiri.* The *Rahatus Sudur* says the Seljuqs were allowed to cross to Oxus at their request, after the imprisonment of Israel, which Mahmud allowed inspite of Arsalan's advice to the contrary.

exiled families were allotted grazing grounds in the districts of north-west Khorasan and placed under the guardianship of the Khorasani nobles, who were ordered to disarm them. But it was easier to bring the Seljuqs into the more fertile tracts of Persia than to keep them in subjection. The migration once begun could not be stopped and the Ghaznavide empire was ultimately converted into a Seljuq pasture-land.(32) These troubles, however, lay in the womb of the future. For the present Mahmud was supreme, and the fall of Israel, whatever its future effects, served as an example to all Turkoman chiefs.

(16) Northern India had ceased to attract Mahmud for the spoils of its most wealthy temples were already in his treasury. But the rich and prosperous province of Gujrat was still untouched, and on October 18, 1020, he started from Ghaznin with his regular troops and thirty thousand volunteer horsemen for the temple of Somnath, situated at the distance of a bow-shot from the mouth of the Saraswati, by the side of which the earthly body of Lord Krishna had breathed its last.(33)

(31) He escaped out of prison once but lost his way and was recaptured.

(32) *Ferishta, Rauzatus Safa, Rahatus Sudur* and *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* greatly differ in their account of the earlier events that brought the Seljuqs into prominence. The matter cannot be discussed here in detail, and I must content myself with giving what appears to me to be the most rational account. See also art. '*Seljuq*,' *Ency. Brit.*, by Prof. Houtsma.

(33) The Somnath expedition is not described by Utbi, whose chronicle closes after the defeat of Trilocanpal on the Rahib. The earliest authority seems to be the *Kamilut Tawarikh* of the Arab historian, Ibn-i Asir. Ferishta gives a detailed account but he has included later accretions which require a critical examination.

"The people of Hind," says Ferishta following Ibn-i Asir, "believed that souls after separating from their bodies came to Somnath, and the god assigned to each soul, by way of transmigration, such new body as it deserved. They thought the tide rose and fell in order to worship the idol. The Brahmans said that as the god was angry with the idols Mahmud had broken, he did not come to their help; otherwise he could destroy anyone he wanted in the twinkling of an eye. Somnath was the king while other idols were merely his door-keepers and chamberlains. A hundred thousand people used to collect together in the temple at the time of the solar and lunar eclipses. Presents came to it from distant parts. The princes of Hindustan had endowed it with about ten thousand villages.(34) A thousand Brahmans worshipped the idol continuously; and every night it was washed with fresh water from the Ganges, although the Ganges is six hundred *karohs* from there.(35) A chain of gold, weighing two hundred maunds, with bells fastened to it, was hung in a corner of the temple; it was shaken at the appointed hours to inform the Brahmans that the time for prayer had arrived. Five hundred singing and dancing girls and two hundred musicians were in the service of the temple, and all their requisites were provided out of the endowments and offerings. Three hundred barbers were employed to shave the heads and beards of the pilgrims. Many Rajas of Hindustan dedicated their

(34) I have corrected the figures in this paragraph from Ibn-i Asir.

(35) Alberuni says they also brought a basket of flowers from Kashmir.

daughters to Somnath and sent them there. The temple was a spacious edifice and its roof was supported by fifty-six ornamented columns. The idol was cut out of stone; it was five yards long, of which two yards were below, and three above, the ground. The *Tarikh-i Zainul Ma-asir* says that the inner chamber of the temple, in which the idol was placed, was dark, the requisite light being supplied by the rays of fine gems attached to the hanging lamps."(36)

The Somnath expedition is the one by which Mahmud is most remembered. It was the finest achieve-

(36) The legend to which Somnath owed its origin is thus described by Alberuni: "The Moon being married to the daughters (lunar stations) of Prajapati (Brahman, First Cause), preferred one of them, Rohini, to all others, and Prajapati, unable to induce his son-in-law to do justice to all his wives, cursed him so that he became leprous. The Moon repented, but Prajapati's curse was beyond recall. He, however, promised to cover the Moon's shame for half the month and advised him to raise a *linga* of Mahadeo to wipe off the trace of his sin. This the Moon did. The *linga* he raised was the idol of Somnath, for *Soma* means the *moon* and *nath* means the *master*, so that the whole word means *the master of the moon*. The image was destroyed by Prince Mahmud in 416 A.H. He ordered the upper part to be broken and the remainder to be transported to his residence, Ghaznin, with all its coverings and trappings of gold, jewels and embroidered garments. Part of it has been thrown into the hippodrome of the town, together with the *Cakrasvamin*, an idol of bronze, that had been brought from Thaneswar. Another part of the idol of Somnath lies before the door of the mosque of Ghaznin, on which people rub their feet to clean them from dirt and wet. The reason why Somnath, in particular, has become so famous is that it was a harbour for seafaring people. The fortress which contained the idol and its treasures was not ancient but was built only a hundred years ago." The original position of the idol was three miles from the mouth of the Saraswati at a spot which was uncovered when the tide receded; hence the legend of the Moon worshipping the *linga*. Later on the temple was built a bow-shot from the mouth of the river. (*Alberuni, Vol. ii, p. 103.*)

ment of his military genius. His marches into Hindustan had been through a fertile country and he was never in danger of starvation. In moving southwards Mahmud for the first and last time threw his caution aside, defied the inclemencies of nature as well as the spears of his opponents and ventured into a territory where the slightest mishap would have meant complete ruin. Multan was reached by the middle of Ramazan (November) and Mahmud made careful preparations for crossing the extensive desert of Rajputana. Every man in the army was ordered to carry enough water and corn for several days and thirty thousand camels were loaded as a further precaution. The Rai of Ajmere fled at the approach of the invader. Mahmud plundered the city but refused to delay his march by investing the fort. A general panic seems to have deprived the garrisons on the line of his advance of all power of resistance. Even Anhilwara, the capital of Gujrat, was left undefended, and Mahmud, after taking from the city the provisions he required, moved down the Saraswati and reached the famous temple in the second week of January. 'The fort of Somnath raised its towers to the sky; the waves of the sea washed its feet.' The Hindus had climbed the ramparts to witness the arrival of the besiegers. "Our god, Somnath," they shouted to the Mussalmans, "has brought you here to destroy you at one blow for the idols you have broken in Hindustan."

Next morning, which was Friday, the struggle commenced. The Ghaznavides succeeded in scaling the city-walls and the Hindus made a desperate attempt to dislodge them. But night came on before the battle

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army to a last attack, and with the good fortune that never permanently deserted him, succeeded in breaking the enemy ranks. The defeat of the relieving force decided the fate of Somnath, and the garrison, overcome by panic and fear, offered no further resistance.

Mahmud entered the temple and possessed himself of its fabulous wealth. 'Not a hundreth part of the gold and precious stones he obtained from Somnath were to be found in the treasury of any king of Hindustan.' Later historians have related how Mahmud refused the enormous ransom offered by the Brahmans, and, preferring the title of 'Idol-breaker' (*But-shikan*) to that of 'Idol-seller' (*But-farosh*), struck the idol with his mace, his piety being instantly rewarded by the precious stones that came out of its belly. This is an impossible story.(37) Apart from the fact that it lacks all contemporary confirmation, the Somnath idol was a solid unsculptured *linga*, not a statue, and stones could not come out of its belly. That the idol was broken is unfortunately true enough, but the offer of the Brahmans, and Mahmud's rejection of the offer, is a fable of later days.

From Somnath Mahmud advanced against Param Deo, Rai of Anhilwara, who seems to have been mainly responsible for the relieving force that had pushed the Ghaznavides so hard. The Rai took refuge in the fort of Khandah, forty *farsakhs* from Somnath, which was surrounded by the sea. But when Mah-

(37) It is not found in the *Kamilut Tawarikh*. The earliest authority seems to have been the *Tarikh-i Alfi*, written six hundred years after Mahmud. The story could have been invented (and believed) only by those who were ignorant of the true structure of the Somnath idol.

mud forded the sea at low tide, the Rai fled away, leaving the fort and its treasures to the Sultan. On returning to Anhilwara Mahmud for the first and last time seems to have harboured the desire of establishing himself in India. He wanted to make Anhilwara his capital while assigning Ghaznin to Masud. The climate of Gujrat, 'the beauty of its inhabitants, its alluring gardens, flowing rivers and productive soil' attracted him, and his cupidity was further excited by the treasure to be obtained from Southern India and the islands beyond the sea. But his officers would have none of it. "To leave the country of Khorasan," they protested, "for which we have sacrificed the finest of gems—our own lives—and to make Gujrat our capital, is far from political wisdom." Mahmud had to yield. He assigned the governorship of Gujrat to Dabshilim (Devasarum), an ascetic of Somnath, and started for Ghaznin. Dabshilim loyally sent the tribute due to the Sultan for some time, but his power failed to take root and he was overthrown by his enemies.(38)

The Rais of Rajputana, who had been taken unawares by Mahmud's march through their country, now prepared to contest his return. But the Sultan's army was loaded with spoils. He had no stomach for campaigns in a wilderness where nothing was to be had save hard blows and preferred to march to Multan through the Sindh desert. Even this route was full of dangers. First a Hindu devotee of Somnath under-

(38) Ferishta's detailed account of the two Dabshilims seems to have no better foundation than the *Anwar-i Suhaili*. It is difficult to say what element of truth it contains.

took to guide the army, and after marching for a day and a night confessed that he had intentionally led them on a path where no water could be found. Mahmud slew the guide and a 'mysterious light' that appeared in the horizon in response to his prayers led the Mussalmans to fresh water. After crossing the desert the army was harassed by the Jats, but in spite of many hardships, it succeeded in reaching Ghaznin.

(17) Mahmud's last invasion (1027) was intended to punish the Jats who had so wantonly insulted his army on its return from Somnath. He constructed a flotilla of fourteen hundred boats at Multan, and placing twenty men armed with bows, arrows and flasks of naphtha in every boat, proceeded against the recalcitrant tribe. The Jats collected together four thousand boats and offered a stout resistance; but they were defeated in the naval battle owing to the superior construction of the Sultan's boats, which had been provided with one pointed iron spike in front and one on each side, and the havoc wrought by explosions of naphtha. Many of the Jats were drowned and their families, which they had removed to the islands of the Indus for safety, were captured.

The Sultan's remaining years were exclusively absorbed in western affairs. The Seljuq trouble increased day by day. His generals were unable to subdue them and appealed to him to come in person. He did so. The Seljuqs were defeated and dispersed, but their pastoral bands parted only to unite again. Meanwhile his officers had overthrown the Buwaihid kingdom of Ray and the Sultan marched thither to

establish his government over the newly conquered territory. His hand fell heavily on the 'heretics' and Carmathians who had multiplied under the protection of the Shia dynasty, and every one, against whom heresy could be proved, was put to death. But the Sultan's days were numbered, and the first symptoms of phthisis (*sil*) had already appeared when in the autumn of 1029 he assigned the government of Isfahan and Ray to Masud and returned to Balkh. Here his condition grew worse, though 'he bore up bravely in the eyes of the people.' In the spring he moved to Ghaznin, where on the 30th April, 1030 A.D. after forty years of ceaseless activity he was called back to the land of everlasting rest at the age of sixty-three.

"The world grips hard on the hard-striving," Hafiz has said; and tradition will have us believe that two days before his death the great Sultan, unable to reconcile himself to the loss of a world that was slipping out of his grasp, ordered the precious stones of his treasury to be brought and displayed in the courtyard of his palace. He gazed at them yearningly and with weeping eyes ordered them to be locked up again, without finding it in his heart to give anything in charity. Next day he got into his litter and reviewed his horses, elephants and camels, and still more overcome burst into loud and helpless sobs.(39) But it

(39) This account is found in Ferishta, who says that Mahmud died with 'much reluctance and regret,' and all later historians repeat the incident. Its origin is hard to discover. It may have been taken from the lost portion of Baihaki. There is nothing improbable in the story. Consumptive diseases have such effects.

would be unbecoming to pause over the last moments of a strong and powerful mind. Perhaps the slow and wasting disease had so bereft him of his strength, that at the door of death he was no longer able to hold over his face the veil with which he was wont to conceal his human frailties! Perhaps his rationalistic mind, too critical for the commonplace orthodoxy of the day and not profound enough for the deeper convictions of the philosopher and the mystic, trembled at the mysterious land before him as he saw it approaching nearer hour by hour, and was unable to embark on his last campaign with that confident courage with which he had plunged into the forests of Hindustan! It is by the manner of his life, not the mode of his death, that a man is to be judged. The invincible hero of thirty campaigns had disappeared weeks before his officers buried his emaciated body in the Ferozah Palace of Ghaznin.

CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTER AND VALUE OF MAHMUD'S WORK.

All men are more or less the product of their environment, and a rational criticism of Mahmud's work must begin with an examination of the spirit of his age.

Most Mussalmans imagine that their faith has always been what it is to-day, or in the alternative they deplore that it has since the time of the Pious Caliphs been subject to a slow but continuous decline. This is, of course, absurd. Islam, like all other religions, has had its recurring periods of spiritual rise and fall; it has been differently conceived by different people at different times; like all things really and truly human, it is always changing and never permanently the same. We are here only concerned with the broadest changes in the Muslim world, and these, from the rise of Islam to the conquest of Muslim Asia by Chengiz Khan, may be divided into four parts. (1) The first Period of Expansion (622-748 A.D.), which includes the conquest of Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Persia, and Northern Africa under the Pious Caliphs and their Omayyad successors. It is an epoch characterised by fervent religious zeal, and owing to the captivating appeal Islam made to the depressed classes, the conquered peoples were converted to the new faith. (2) The Period of the Abbasid Caliphate (748-900 A.D.) is a period of prosperity and peace with no conquest to its record. It is

characterised by a cosmopolitan civilisation in which Arabic became the language of the educated classes of all countries, while a centralised administration kept the Muslim world together. (3) The Period of 'Minor Dynasties' (900-1000 A.D.) is essentially a period of transition in which the administration of the Caliph disappears and a number of small principalities rise on its ruins. Its most prominent feature is the Persian Renaissance, which made Persian the language of literary classes and brought a new imperialistic idea to the forefront in place of cosmopolitan Caliphate of the Abbasids. (4) The Period of the Turko-Persian Empires (1000-1220 A.D.) is to be regarded as the political expression of Persian ideals and includes the reigns of the Ghaznavide, the Seljuq and the Khwarazmian dynasties.

Mahmud was the last of the 'Minor Kings' and the first of the great Turko-Persian Emperors. The inspiring motive of his life and the lives of his contemporaries was not Islam but the spirit of the Persian Renaissance.

The age of Mahmud of Ghaznin was devoid of the higher spirit of faith; and theological discussions, which prosper most when religion is dead, diverted such zeal as existed towards a war of sects. When men find it difficult to believe in God, they try to prove Him; when they cease to love their neighbour, they attempt to convince themselves that hating him is a moral duty. The conversion of the non-Muslim was given up in favour of the more entertaining game of exterminating the 'heretic.' From east to west the Muslim world was torn by sectarian feuds and the

strong arm of the persecutor was called in vain to heal the troubles of a people weltering in fanaticism but devoid of faith. From this war of hair-splitting theologians the finer minds of Persia turned with a sense of relief to the resuscitation of their national culture, and the minor dynasties that had grown on the decay of the Caliphate gave them the protection and patronage they needed. Every provincial court became the centre of a revivalist movement. Ancient Persian legends were rediscovered and popularised. The Persian language, which had been cast aside as the vernacular of the common people, assumed the dignity of a national tongue. Every one, who could, began to turn out verses in a language singularly capable of conforming to the hardest rules of metre and rhyme, and even poets of mediocre abilities could be sure of a good career. Moreover, the glories of the Kiani and the Sassani Empires, alluring with the dream of a half-forgotten greatness, exercised on more imaginative minds a fascination which slowly but definitely drew them away from the Path of the Prophet. The change was, of course, unconscious. Like the schoolmen of mediæval Europe, who talked as if the philosophy of Aristotle was a commentary on the 'Ten Commandments,' the contemporaries of Mahmud were aware of no difference between the lessons of the *Shah Namah* and the principles of the *Quran*. Faridun and Jamshed, Kai-Kaus and Kai-Khusrau, the heroic Rustam and the Macedonian Alexander won from the rising generation the homage which all true Mussalmans should have paid to the Prophet and his Companions. Now, while the Prophet and his

Companions stood for certain principles to be established at all costs and had resorted to war as a means for their promulgation, the legendary heroes of Persia only evoked in their devotees an ambition for greatness and ruthless imperialism without the sense of a moral mission, and instilled them with precepts of worldly wisdom, such as Polonious bequeathed to Laertes and such as Sadi's *Gulistan* has taught to the children of later generations—a wisdom essentially selfish in its outlook and superbly unconscious of all moral aims.

Thus the new spirit, on one hand, helped the evolution of a new culture and brought an atmosphere of refinement and polish in the court and the camp, and, on the other hand, it heralded in an era of futile and purposeless wars through which provincial kings, rebellious governors, tribal chiefs and even daring robbers, expected to reach the insecure eminence of Alexander, the Great. Fighting was looked upon, thanks to the militant spirit of the Turks, as a sport and an attribute of manliness, a good thing to be sought for itself—not as a painful process for the attainment of peace. For a century before Mahmud princes of the 'minor dynasties' had been acting Jamshed and Kai-Khusrau, and their court-poets, richly paid for the work, had proclaimed their greatness in panegyrics of which men less lost in ambition would have felt ashamed. Then came the great Mahmud to achieve that for which others had fought and died in vain, and kings and princes licked the dust humbly before the figure of a new Alexander. But the giant for all his grandeur was made of the same moral stuff as the dwarfs that had gone before. It

was his abilities, not his character, that raised him to an unquestioned pre-eminence.

The literary Renaissance of Persia found in Mahmud its most magnificent, if not its most discriminating, patron. Four hundred poets, with Unsuri, the poet-laureate, at their head, were in constant attendance at the Sultan's court. Their official duty was to sing his praise, and the Sultan, inspite of the stinginess attributed to him, seems to have been extremely generous. Ghazari Razi, a poet from Ray, was awarded fourteen thousand *dirhams* for a *qasida* that pleased the Sultan, while the poet-laureate's mouth was thrice filled with pearls for an unpremeditated *qita*. Among others who came flocking from far and near, Farrukhi, the author of a *qasida* remarkable for its captivating rhythm, Minuchihri, who specialised in the cult of vine, and Asjadi, who is responsible for the following well-known quatrain, are most famous(40) :—

"I do repent of wine and talk of wine,
"Of idols fair with chins like silver fine.
"A lip-repentance and a lustful heart—
"O God, forgive this penitence of mine!"

But it is obvious that the Sultan's patronage, while stimulating men of decent merit to do their best, would

(40) The details of the lives of the poets cannot be given here, nor an examination of their work attempted. Prof. Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. II, Chap. II and Maulana [illegible] *Shirul-Ajam*, Vol. I, have put in a modern form all that is found in old *Taskirahs*. See also Hadi's *Studies in Persian Literature*, published by the National University, Delhi. The Firdausi legend has been subjected to a trenchant criticism by the journal 'Urdu,' edited by Maulvi Abdul Haq Sahib, which has robbed the time-honoured story of all its charm.

fail to reach that highest genius, which in every country and every age has scorned to bow its knees to democracies and kings. For this Mahmud is in no way to blame. Mankind has yet to discover a method for dealing with its finest product. Whatever be the element of truth in the famous Firdausi legend, the tradition that represents the great poet, in whom Persian nationalism amounted to a religion, as flying from an emperor of Afrasiyab's (Turkish) race, certainly gives us an idea of the gloom that sat oppressively on the most sensitive Persian minds. Two persons of a radically different stamp were destined to share Firdausi's fate. The great physician and biologist, Shaikh Bu Ali Sina (Avicenna), refused to come to the court of a king to whom the scientist's views and his sense of personal independence would have been equally unpalatable, and after fleeing from town to town before the agents of Mahmud's wrath, at last found a safe asylum with the Buwaihid ruler of Ray. His friend, the mathematician-scholar Abu Rihan Alberuni, whose appreciative study of Hindu philosophy stands in such pleasant contrast with the prejudices of a stormy time, was less fortunate. Brought a prisoner from his native Khwarazm, he was thrown into prison and thence exiled to India on that life of wandering to which we owe the immortal *Tarikhul Hind.*(41)

The poetry of Mahmud's age reflects the spirit of the time. It is brilliant but not deep. Mystic ideas

(41) Some very interesting anecdotes about Alberuni and Bu Ali Sina will be found in the *Chahar Maqala* of Nizami-ul Aruzi-us Samarqandi (Gibb's Memorial Series). A short biography of Bu Ali Sina is given in the *Habibus Siyar.*

had not yet become current coin, and the *ghazal*, the grand vehicle of mystic emotion, had not yet been discovered. *Qasidas* (panegyric odes) in praise of generous patrons were the poet's principal occupation. The genius of Firdausi brought the *masnavi* (romance) into vogue, while his master, Asadi, is credited with the not very commendable invention of the *munazriah* or 'strife-poem'—a composition which leaves little room for poetic thoughts. *Qitas* (fragments) and *rubais* (quatrains) served to express the poet's lighter moods. Yet the Ghaznavide poets, for all their shortcomings, have a certain freshness which succeeding ages have lacked. There is no artificiality about them. They had tasted the joy of material prosperity and loved to praise the beauty of women of flesh and blood and the alluring intoxication of wine. The reality of their human emotions prevented them from falling into the meaningless verbosity of later ages; and if they lack the deeper meaning of their mystic successors, whose songs begin and end with a symbolic representation of the Absolute, their poetry is at least in touch with life. The poet sang of what his audience knew and felt—the clash of arms on the field of strife, the joys of companionship in the warrior's camp, the innumerable emotions of men and women whom an artificial culture had not yet deprived of their native intensity of feeling, and, above all, the glories and sorrows of their much loved Iran. The thoughts and emotions of the educated men of the day were not the unbecoming theme of the poet's verse. The great period of Persian poetry, that begins with Sadi and ends with Jami, was yet

to come. Nevertheless, the constructive genius of the poet won victories more solid than the warrior's futile campaigns. The empire of Mahmud crumbled to dust nine years after the Sultan's death. The *Shah Namah* lives for ever.

Mahmud's work in India is reserved for a separate discussion but the Sultan was essentially a Central Asiatic prince. The historic soil of Ajam was the garden and the grave of Ghaznavide hopes. The cosmopolitan administration of the Caliphate had been shattered beyond the possibility of reconstruction, and the 'new imperialism' with is secular and Persian outlook had been in the air for some generations past. Now 'imperialism' meant two things—first, a conquest of the smaller principalities that would bring all Muslim peoples, who had been infused with the spirit of Persian civilisation, within the fold of a single state; and secondly, the erection of a just and beneficent administration that would reconcile every section of the subjects to their common government by an era of prosperity and peace. Mahmud's performance of the first part of his work is as remarkable as his failure to perform the second. The rise of the Ghaznavide Empire struck contemporaries with wonder; but they were no less surprised by the rapidity of its fall.

A man of refinement and culture, with an instinctive admiration for everything beautiful in literature and art, it was in generalship that Mahmud excelled. War was the prevailing madness, but never since the fall of the Sassanian Empire before the armies of the Second Caliph had an invader so invincible appeared

on Persian soil. The exploits of Alexander in the East were rivalled, and, in fact, surpassed. The Tatar barbarians of the north were driven pell-mell beyond the Jaxartes. The 'minor dynasties' of Persia were crushed to death. From Isfahan to Bundelkhand and from Samarkand to Gujrat, the Ghaznavide subdued every opponent and struck down every rival. The conquered people were no cowards. They fought bravely and were as willing to die as their Ghaznavide opponents. It was Mahmud's scientific imagination that made the difference. Against the clumsy organisation of the Rajputs and their childish trust in mere numbers he brought into the field an army that had been trained to obey the commands of a single will. The thick-headed Tatars found to their cost that mere courage, and a confidence in fate, was no match for the fierce onslaught of disciplined ranks. But strategy rather than tactics was Mahmud's strong point. From his throne at Ghaznin his eagle eye surveyed everything in east and west. He knew where to strike and he always struck hard. The rapidity of his marches surprised and bewildered his opponents. The man who, in the course of a single winter, overawed the Carmathians of Multan, defeated the Tatars at Balkh and yet found time enough to capture a rebellious governor on the banks of the Jhelum, could not fail to create a havoc among his stout-hearted but slow-moving contemporaries. And yet Mahmud, for all his daring, was the most cautious of men. He never attacked an enemy he was not strong enough to overpower. He never failed in what he undertook because he undertook nothing

impossible. The Indian invasions, in which his military genius shows itself at its best, are a marvellous mixture of boldness and caution.

Administrative questions, on the other hand, never interested Mahmud, and while taking up the command of the army in person, he left the prosaic task of carrying on the government to his ministers. His civil officers had the efficiency he required; they were strict and heavy-handed and worked their machinery with the same discipline and order as their military colleagues. But they lacked the breadth of vision which would have enabled them to supplement the conquests of their master by a far-sighted statesmanship and construct a machinery of imperial administration on permanent and durable foundations. His *wazirs* were certainly clever and thorough in their methods, but like all administrative experts they were devoid of idealism, and an empire without ideals is an edifice on quicksand. For the first two years of his reign his father's *wazir*, Abul Abbas Fasih Ahmed bin Isfarieni, continued at his post. Abul Abbas was ignorant of Arabic and made Persian the official language—an innovation abolished by his famous successor. But if lacking in education, he had that extensive knowledge of affairs, which was to be expected of one who had risen to be the second greatest man in the kingdom from the humble position of a clerk, and 'worked marvels in the administration of the state and the army.' The Sultan, however, quarrelled with him over the possession of a Turkish slave, and the fallen *wazir* was tortured to death by the nobles who wished to deprive him of all his wealth. Abul Abbas'

successor, the great Khwaja Ahmad bin Hasan Maimandi, left on his contemporaries an impression second only to that of Mahmud. A foster brother and classmate of the Sultan, Khwaja Ahmad was distinguished throughout his life by an unimpeachable loyalty to the House of Ghaznin, which in no way interfered with the exacting obedience he demanded of his subordinates for himself. His father, Hasan Maimandi, collector of revenue at Bust, was hanged by Subuktigin on a charge of peculation, but the sad event had no effect on the son's career. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the Sultan to embark on his conquering career without the organising capacity of his minister to support him. An excellent scholar, an intriguer of the highest order and a stern man of business, Ahmad directed the affairs of the government for eighteen years with an efficiency none could deny. But a strong *wazir* and a strong Sultan were really incompatible; the Khwaja's soft tongue and effusive loyalty delayed, but could not finally prevent, the inevitable rupture. His extraordinary ascendency was painful to many, and a strong party, headed by the Sultan's son-in-law, Amir Ali, and the great general, Altuntash, was formed against him. The Sultan made up his mind to prove that the Khwaja was not indispensable and imprisoned him in an Indian fort. As if to show that the office could be abolished, if necessary, Mahmud refrained from appointing a *wazir* for some time. His choice ultimately fell on Ahmad Husain bin Mikal, generally known as Hasnak. The new *wazir*, a close personal friend of the Sultan, was remarkable for his

'conversational powers,' and unfortunately also for 'the impetuosity of his temperament,' which impelled him to take the wrong side on the succession question that arose towards the end of Mahmud's reign.

An extensive empire had been established over the ruins of many governments. What for? We are not told that Mahmud's administration was better than what had existed before, while the collection of revenue was certainly more strict. Everybody complained that the Sultan went on conquering without being able to establish peace and order in the conquered lands. The condition of the Punjab was chaotic and other provinces fared no better. Caravan routes were unsafe and the occasional efforts of the government to provide for the safety of its merchants display its weakness rather than its strength. "He is a stupid fellow!" a Muslim mystic is said to have remarked of him, "Unable to administer what he already possesses, he yet goes out to conquer new countries." A strong sense of justice Mahmud certainly had, and many stories and anecdotes are told about it, but he never went beyond deciding with acuteness and wisdom the few cases that came before him. No general effort was made to suppress the robber chiefs whose castles prevented all inter-communication between the various parts of the empire. No imperial police system was organised to perform the work which smaller princes present on the spot had done before. The armed and organised populations of mediæval cities towns [illegible] up a[illegible] was [illegible]

Ghaznavide government with the empires of the Seljuqs and the Emperor-Sultans of Delhi to see the element Mahmud woefully lacked. No laws, good or bad, stand to his name. No administrative measure of importance emanated from his acute mind, which failed to see anything greater or nobler than an ever-expanding field of military glory. The peoples forcibly brought within the empire—Indians, Afghans, Turks, Tatars and Persians—were joined together by no bond except their subordination to a common monarch! A wise, firm and beneficent administration would have reconciled them to the loss of their local liberties, but that is just what Mahmud failed to provide. The Sultan and his officers alone were interested in the continuation of the empire; and when nine years after Mahmud's death, the Seljuqs knocked down the purposeless structure, no one cared to weep over its fate.

These observations will enable us to assign to Mahmud his proper place in eastern history. He was essentially the pioneer of the 'new imperialism' brought into vogue by the Persian Renaissance. The era of the 'Universal Muslim Caliphate' had gone, never to return and the Successor of the Prophet was no more the administrative head of the Faithful. The 'minor dynasties' had proved themselves a pest by their unceasing intrigues and purposeless wars. The [illegible] secular empire,' or [illegible] would unite [illegible] an [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

institution, which drew its inspiration from ancient Persia, and breathed its pagan spirit; and the *Shariat*, inspite of its democratic outlook, was gradually twisted to suit the requirements of the time and ended by preaching submission to the monarch, who assumed, under the pretence of being the 'shadow of God' (*Zillullah*), the airs of the 'divine' Sassanian emperors. The result was both good and bad. The democratic feeling, which has persisted in the social life of the Mussalmans inspite of all opposing forces, was eliminated from politics, and political subservience, from being a postulate of necessity and prudence, was elevated to the dignity of a religious duty. "Obedience to kings," says Abul Fazl, summing up the wisdom and the folly of six hundred years, "is a kind of divine worship." At the same time the monarchical idea and the secularisation of politics led to much that was undoubtedly beneficial. The peoples of Ajam were welded together by their loyalty to a common king inspite of their racial differences and sectarian strifes. Moreover, it became possible for Muslims and non-Muslims to live together when religion was considered as a private affair of the king and the sphere of government was restricted to the secular affairs of the subjects.

To Mahmud of Ghaznin belongs the credit of being the first Muslim Emperor, and to him more than to any one else the rise of 'monarchy' among the Mussalmans is due. It does not detract from his merit that he was followed by statesmen abler than himself and by dynasties more permanent than his own. The Seljuqs of Persia and the Emperor-Sultans

of Delhi surpassed him in administrative ability, and Chengiz and Timur in conquering might. A pioneer is bound to have his shortcomings. His Central Asiatic policy was devoid of statesmanship while his work in India was even more deplorable.

Though India took up much of Mahmud's time, she had no place in his dreams. His real aim was the establishment of a Turko-Persian Empire and the Indian expeditions were a means to that end. They gave him the prestige of a Holy Warrior, which was required to raise him head and shoulders above the basketful of Ajami princes, every one of whom was determined to be great, while the wealth of the temples made the financial position of his kingdom secure and enabled him to organise an army which the minor princes were in no position to resist. Beyond this Mahmud, who knew the limitations of his power, did not try to go. No conquest was intended because no conquest was possible. A Muslim government over the country was beyond the region of practical politics without a native Muslim population to support it. Mahmud was no missionary; conversion was not his object; and he was too sensible to waste away his army in a futile attempt to keep down a hostile population by armed garrisons. He took at a sweep-stake all that centuries of Indian industry had accumulated, and then left the Indians to rebuild, as well as they could, the ruined fortifications of their cities and the fallen altars of their gods. He obtained the gold and the prestige he needed and he had aspired for nothing else. Except for a passing mood at Anhilwara he

safely at the enemy. But caution brought success, success brought prestige, and Mahmud, finding that his mere name had grown powerful enough to overawe his enemies, plunged thrice into the Trans-Gangetic plain and a fourth time into Gujrat. The campaigns look like triumphal marches but were really full of danger. Even an indecisive battle would have revived the spirit of the much harassed Indians and brought unexpected forces into the field. Mahmud trembled when in 1019-20, after an uncontested march of three months from his capital, he at last came across the Rai of Kalanjar, who could show a good fight; yet the flight of the Rai at night shows the terror the Sultan inspired. Still if Mahmud was to possess himself of the treasures of the temples, the risk had to be undertaken; for a piece-meal annexation of the country was beyond his strength. The issue showed that he had not miscalculated any important factor of the situation.

The Sultan's great advantage over his Indian opponents was the unitary organisation of his state. The resources of Ghaznin were at the disposal of a single mind; the strength of Hindustan was divided among a multitude of factious Rais, sub-Rais, local chiefs and village-headmen, between whom anything like sensible co-operation was impossible. The feudal organisation of the Rajputs, with its divided allegiance, clannish spirit and love of local independence, left them helpless before an enemy to whom feudalism and clannish feeling was alike unknown. The Ghaznavides knew and obeyed their master; the Rajputs had no master to obey. The power of the Rai of

Lahore was defied by the Rais subordinate to him, who refused to be relegated to the position of mere governors; and instead of meeting the enemy as the loyal generals of the chief whom his position and pre-eminence alike seemed to mark off for a national hero, they preferred to be defeated by the Ghaznavide one by one. An internal revolution, which would place the defensive power of the country in the hands of a central power, was absolutely necessary if the newly-arisen enemy was to be resisted with success. But the hand of the reformer was numbed by the time-honoured customs of ages; and the tribal feuds of the Rajputs, their complicated system of military tenure and local rights, prevented them from mustering in full force on the field of battle. The result was defeat, disgrace, disaster. Temple after temple was plundered; the centres of Indian civilisation were ruined; and neither the wisdom of the Brahman, nor the heroism of the Rajput, nor the pious adoration of silent millions could prevent their idols of gold and silver from being melted into Ghaznavide coin. The Indians did not lack fighting spirit, and they had a country and a religion fully worthy of their devotion. The carnage round the Somnath temple, the courage with which the garrison of many an unknown fort died to the last man before the unwavering Ghaznavide ranks, showed what better leadership might have achieved—proved, if proof were needed, that even in the hour of deepest gloom the Indians had not forgotten how to die. But their social and political customs paralysed them; for with us,

unfortunately, custom is not an accident but the essence of faith.

The great Sultan did not fail to take advantage of this 'organised anarchy' once he had discovered its real nature. His first steps were tentative, but the spectacle of an army, innumerable as ants and locusts, flying away from Und (1008) before even the battle had become warm, convinced him that the Indian Confederacy was a soul-less ghost before which he had needlessly trembled. With ceaseless care he and his father had forged a terrible machine which could be now used to good purpose. The Ghaznavide army was composed of heterogeneous material, but strict discipline, years of comradeship in arms, the memory of past victories and hope of future spoliation and plunder, had welded Indians, Afghans, Turks and Persians together. Training had created confidence and confidence led to success. Above all, the subordination of everything to the acute intellect and commanding will of the Sultan gave it an irresistible momentum against its faction-ridden opponents. Mahmud flashed like lightning across the path of the bewildered Rais, thrust himself between them before they could unite, drove them away from one another and defeated them in detail. There was no resisting his might. '*Veni, vidi, vici.*' A dark fear began to oppress the Indian mind. It was imagined that the Mussalmans would be always victorious, that a new race of Huns would hold the sacred soil of Aryavarta in perpetual terrorism. Nothing could be farther from truth. The Ghaznavide had not come to stay.

The non-religious character of the expeditions will be obvious to the critic who has grasped the salient features of the spirit of the age. They were not crusades but secular exploits waged for the greed of glory and gold. It is impossible to read a religious motive into them. The Ghaznavide army was not a host of holy warriors resolved to live and die for the Lord; it was an enlisted and paid army of professional soldiers accustomed to fight Hindus and Mussalmans alike. Only in two of the later campaigns were any volunteers present; and insignificant as was their proportion to the regular troops, Mahmud found them unfit for the rapid and disciplined movements he desired. The Sultan was not a democratic hero to marshal the forces of a triumphant fanaticism and he never essayed the task.(42) The missionary spirit, that might have wept over the fate of so many souls 'lost to paradise' or seen in India a fertile soil for implanting the Prophet's Faith, was denied to him. His object was lower and more realisable. Content to deprive the 'unbelivers' of their worldly goods, he never forced them to change their faith and left India the non-Muslim land he found it.

For time out of mind the exports of India had been in excess of her imports and precious metals had been slowly drawn into the country. Mines were also being worked in various provinces. The natural consequence was an ever-accumulating mass of gold and silver, which won for India a reputation for

(42) It is a significant fact that Mahmud seldom, if ever, shared the hard life of his soldiers. Such a thing would have been below the dignity of the 'new monarchy.'

fabulous riches, and by the time of Mahmud had become a serious national danger. Add to it, generations of pious Hindus had gradually transferred the wealth of the country to the temples, which, unlike the peasants' purse and the Rais' treasury, never lost what they had once gained. It was impossible that the Indian temples, like the Catholic Church in Europe, should not sooner or later tempt someone who was strong and unscrupulous enough for the impious deed. Nor was it to be expected that a man of Mahmud's character would allow the tolerance Islam inculcates to restrain him from taking possession of the gold, to which his heart turned as a magnet turns towards iron, when the Indians themselves had simplified his work by concentrating the wealth of their country at a few selected places. Plundering an enemy's place of worship was regarded by contemporaries as a legitimate act of war—the unavoidable consequence of a defeat. His Hindu opponents were infuriated, but not surprised, at what he did; they knew his motives were economic, not religious, and provided a sufficient indemnity was offered, he was not unwilling to spare their idols. He took away the gold they would have loved to retain but never compelled them to join a creed in which they did not believe. His Indian soldiers were free to blow their *sankh* and bow before their idols in Imperial Ghaznin. He accepted the principle of toleration in the restricted form in which his age understood it; and it would be futile to blame him for not rising to the moral height of the generations

that followed and the generations that had gone before.

No honest historian should seek to hide, and no Mussalman acquainted with his faith will try to justify, the wanton destruction of temples that followed in the wake of the Ghaznavide army. Contemporary as well as later historians do not attempt to veil the nefarious acts but relate them with pride. It is easy to twist one's conscience; and we know only too well how easy it is to find a religious justification for what people wish to do from worldly motives. Islam sanctioned neither the vandalism nor the plundering motives of the invader; no principle known to the *Shariat* justified the uncalled-for attack on Hindu princes who had done Mahmud and his subjects no harm; the shameless destruction of places of worship is condemned by the law of every creed. And yet Islam, though it was not an *inspiring motive*, could be utilised as an *a posteriori justification* of what had been done. It was not difficult to mistake the spoliation of non-Muslim populations for a service to Islam, and persons to whom the argument was addressed found it too much in consonance with the promptings of their own passions to examine it critically. So the precepts of the *Quran* were misinterpreted or ignored and the tolerant policy of the Second Caliph was cast aside, in order that Mahmud and his myrmidons might be able to plunder Hindu temples with a clear and untroubled conscience.

It is a situation to make one pause. With a new faith everything depends on its method of presentation. It will be welcomed if it appears as a

message of hope, and hated if it wears the mask of a brutal terrorism. Islam as a world-force is to be judged by the life of the Prophet and the policy of the Second Caliph. Its early successes were really due to its character as a revolutionary force against religions that had lost their hold on the minds of the people and against social and political systems that were grinding down the lower classes. Under such circumstances the victory of Islam was considered by the conquered population as something intrinsically desirable; it ended the *regime* of an aristocratic priesthood and a decrepit monarchy, while the doctrine of equality, first preached in the eastern world, opened a career to the talent of the depressed masses and resulted in a wholesale conversion of the populations of Arabia, Syria, Persia and Iraq. Now Hinduism with its intense and living faith was something quite unlike the Zoroastrianism of Persia and the Christianity of Asia Minor, which had so easily succumbed before the invader; it suffered from no deep-seated internal disease and a peculiarity of the national character of the Hindus, 'deeply seated in them and manifest to everybody,' was their intense satisfaction and pride in their customs. "They believe," says Alberuni, "that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no king like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid. According to their belief, there is no country on earth but theirs, no other race of men but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge or science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is

such that, if you tell them of any science or scholars in Khorasan and Persia, they will think you both an ignoramus and a liar." People with this insularity of outlook were not likely to lend their ears to a new message. But the policy of Mahmud secured the rejection of Islam without a hearing.

A religion is naturally judged by the character of those who believe in it; their faults and their virtues are supposed to be the effect of their creed. It was inevitable that the Hindus should consider Islam a deviation from truth when its followers deviated so deplorably from the path of rectitude and justice. A people is not conciliated by being robbed of all it holds most dear, nor will it love a faith that comes to it in the guise of plundering armies and leaves devastated fields and ruined cities as monuments of its victorious method for reforming the morals of a prosperous but erratic world. "They came, burnt, killed, plundered, captured—and went away" was a Persian's description of the Mongol invasion of his country; it would not be an inappropriate summary of Mahmud's achievement in Hindustan. It was not thus that the Prophet had preached Islam in Arabia; and no one need be surprised that the career of the conquering Ghaznavide created a burning hatred for the new faith in the Hindu mind and blocked its progress more effectually than armies and forts. "Mahmud," says the observant Alberuni, "utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed those wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions and like a tale of old in the mouth of the

people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate hatred of all Muslims. This is the reason, too, why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places where our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares and other places. And there the antagonism between them and all foreigners receives more and more nourishment both from political and religious and other causes."

"The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often buried with their bones!" Mahmud's work, whatever it might have been, was swept off fifteen years after his death by the Hindu Revival. 'Those who had taken up the sword perished by the sword.' East of Lahore no trace of the Mussalmans remained; and Mahmud's victories, while they failed to shake the moral confidence of Hinduism, won an everlasting infamy for his faith. Two centuries later men, who differed from Mahmud as widely as two human beings can possibly differ, once more brought Islam into the land. But times had changed. The arrogance of the Mussalmans had disappeared with the conquest of Ajam by the Mongolian hordes. The spirit of the Persian Renaissance had blossomed and died, and the New Mysticism, with its cosmopolitan tendencies and with doctrines which did not essentially differ from what the Hindu *rishis* had taught in ancient days, made possible that exchange of ideas between men of the two creeds which Alberuni had longed for in vain. Instead of the veterans who had crossed the frontier in search of their winter spoils there came a host of refugees

from the burning villages of Central Asia longing for a spot where they could lay their heads in peace and casting aside all hopes of returning to the land of their birth. The serpent had reappeared but without its poisonous fangs. The intellectual history of mediæval India begins with the advent of Shaikh Moinuddin of Ajmere and its political history with the accession of Sultan Alauddin Khilji; the two features which distinguish it from preceding generations are the mystic propaganda started by the Chishti Saint and the administrative and economic measures inaugurated by the revolutionary Emperor. With the proper history of our country Mahmud has nothing to do. But we have inherited from him the most bitter drop in our cup. To later generations Mahmud became the arch-fanatic he never was; and in that 'incarnation' he is still worshipped by such Indian Mussalmans as have cast off the teaching of Lord Krishna for their devotion to minor gods. Islam's worst enemies have ever been its own fanatical followers.

CHAPTER IV

FALL OF THE GHAZNAVIDE EMPIRE

Sultan Mahmud's two eldest sons, Masud and Mohammad, were born on the same day and it was difficult to decide the question of precedence between them. But Mohammad, a virtuous and educated prince who composed verses in Arabic, had neither the energy nor the strength necessary for wielding a sceptre, and the eyes of all men naturally turned towards his brother, who had the physique and personality of a Rustam. No one could lift Masud's mace with one hand from the ground and his arrow pierced through a plate of steel. But the Sultan, somewhat envious of feats totally beyond his own strength, made a will in favour of Mohammad and obtained a *firman* confirming it from the Caliph. The *wazir,* Hasnak, also worked for Mohammad and a brittle alliance of the nobles was formed in his favour. Masud refused to submit. 'The sword is a truer authority than any writing,' he stoutly declared; and the Sultan, to whom his son's answer was conveyed, felt it to be painfully true.

The conquests in eastern Persia during the last years of Mahmud's reign had been mostly due to Masud, and when returning from Ray to Balkh in 1029, the Sultan had left him in charge of Khorasan and the newly conquered territories. It was, consequently, easier for Mohammad's supporters to obtain control of the capital on his father's death. They

summoned him from Gorkan and placed him on the throne. The new Sultan distributed large sums to make himself popular. His subjects and soldiers thanked him for the kindness but refused to take him seriously. Every one expected Masud would come and overthrow the ricketty government. Less than two months after Mohammad's accession, the famous Abun Najm Ahmad Ayaz, Ali Dayah and a body of slaves took horses from the royal stables in broad daylight and started for Bust. They were overtaken by Soyand Rai, the commander of the Hindus, and in the battle that followed most of the slaves were slain. But Soyand Rai himself was killed, and Ayaz and Ali Dayah succeeded in reaching Masud's camp at Naishapur.

Masud had offered to remain content with Khorasan and Iraq provided his name was given precedence in the *Khutba,* but on receiving a harsh reply from his brother he decided to march on Ghaznin. Mohammad on his side advanced from the capital to Takinabad, where he passed the month of Ramazan. But his strongest supporters, Yusuf bin Subuktigin, a brother of the late Sultan, Amir Ali Kheshawand and the *wazir,* Hasnak, decided to make a belated attempt to please Masud by a betrayal of their own candidate. Two days after Eid, on the night of October 3, they dragged him out of his tent and sent him to a fort of Kandhar, and advanced to welcome his brother at Herat. Masud, however, refused to overlook the fault of those who had conspired against him for years. Mohammad was blinded by his brother's order. Amir Ali Kheshawand

was put to death and Yusuf bin Subuktigin was thrown into prison where he died.

Hasnak was reserved for the disgrace of a public execution at Balkh. Masud recalled his father's famous *wazir,* Khwaja Ahmad bin Hasan Maimandi, from his Indian prison and entrusted him with the office he had held for eighteen years with such dignity and power. The fate of the fallen *wazir,* so graphically described by Baihaki, won the sympathy of all hearts. After weeks of hard and degrading imprisonment Hasnak was summoned to the *diwan* where the great Khwaja behaved with extraordinary politeness. Hasnak was asked to sign a bond giving up all his property to the Sultan and the two *wazirs* parted with touching forgiveness and affection. "In the time of Sultan Mahmud," Hasnak apologized, "and by his orders, I ridiculed the Khwaja; it was a fault but I had no help but to obey. The post of *wazir* was given to me, though it was no place for me. Still I formed no design against the Khwaja and I always favoured his people. I am weary of life but some care ought to be taken of my children and my family and the Khwaja must forgive me." He burst into tears and the Khwaja's eyes were filled with tears also. "You are forgiven," he replied, "but you must not be so dejected for happiness is still possible. I have considered and accept it of the Almighty—I will take care of your family if you are doomed." But the Sultan had made up his mind and the intrigues of Bu Sahl Zauzni, the minister of war, left the issue in no doubt. While passing through Syria on his return journey from Mecca

during the reign of Sultan Mahmud, Hasnak had received a robe of honour from the anti-Caliph of Egypt, and this had laid him open to the charge of being a Carmathian. The Caliph of Bagdad had protested but Mahmud, who knew Hasnak's rationalistic beliefs, would not allow him to be punished for an imputation so baseless. "Write to this doting old Caliph," Mahmud had ordered his secretary, "that for the sake of the Abbasids I have meddled with all the world. I am hunting for Carmathians, and whenever one is found who is proved to be so, he is impaled. If it was proved that Hasnak is a Carmathian, the Commander of the Faithful would soon learn what had happened to him. But I have brought him up and he stands on an equality with my sons and my brothers. If he is a Carmathian, so am I also." The old charge was now revived. Two men were dressed up as messengers from the Caliph demanding Hasnak's death as a Carmathian, and Masud, with pretended reluctance, acceded to the Caliph's demand. But everybody knew the truth. "If Masud mounts the throne, let me be hanged," Hasnak had declared in the days of his arrogant power; and Masud having succeeded, Hasnak had to mount 'the steed he had never ridden before.'

At the foot of the scaffold Hasnak threw off his coat and shirt. 'His body was white as silver and his face like hundreds of thousands of pictures.' All men were crying with grief. He replied neither to the insults of his enemies nor to the questions asked, but his lips were seen moving in some silent prayer. He was made to wear a helmet and vizor

lest his head, which was to be sent to the Caliph, should be battered beyond recognition by the stones the public was expected to throw. But the public, barring a few vagabonds hired by the government, threw no stones. A great uproar would have arisen if the royal horsemen had not prevented it. His fellow-citizens, the Naishapurians, wept bitterly when the hangman cast a rope round his neck and suffocated him. For seven years Hasnak hung from the gibbet. His corpse dried up; the bones of his feet dropped off, and 'not a remnant of him was left to be taken down and buried in the usual way—no one knew where his head was or where his body.' A last touch to the tragedy was given by Hasnak's mother who refused to weep as women weep; but a deep cry of anguish burst from her lips when she was told of his death. "What a fortune was my son's!" she exclaimed, "A king like Mahmud gave him this world, and one like Masud the next."

Masud now seemed as secure as his father had ever been. He had a commanding personality and a strong and unbending will. He was surrounded by a body of efficient and loyal officers who had served his father for years. He had no rival to fear. The government appeared strong in the extent of its territory, its armies, its revenue and its mass of hoarded wealth. Nevertheless a careful observer would have found the forces of decay everywhere at work. It was not easy to wield Mahmud's sceptre. Masud was unheeding and paid no attention to the advice of his wisest counsellor. His superb self-confidence gave way to a senseless panic in the hour of danger and

showed him to be totally lacking in that calmness of nerve which comes through the strength of the intellect rather than power of muscle and bone. He struck thoughtlessly and in the wrong quarter with a total incapacity to distinguish the most dangerous of his enemies from the most contemptible of his foes. The firmness with which he wielded his axe and his spear in the field of battle shone in tragic contrast with the folly with which he directed his campaigns and destroyed the *morale* of his troops before the enemy could fall upon them. Equally lacking in the gifts of a statesman and a general, Masud would have done well to rely on the judgment of a wiser man. Khwaja Hasan Maimandi, restored to more than his former glory, directed the government with efficiency so far as civil affairs were concerned; but the Khwaja never meddled in military matters, and his death in 1037 left Masud free to mismanage things to his heart's content; and within ten years of his father's death he had lost his army and his empire and was fleeing a helpless fugitive to an inhospitable land.

The two dangers Masud had to fear were the Rais of Hindustan in the east and the Seljuqs in the west. The former, terrorised rather than subdued by Mahmud, were sure to wake up when the invincible conqueror was no more. But they were a lethargic people and would in any case remain on the defensive. Masud's obvious plan should have been to crush the Seljuqs before it was too late and leave the Rais for a more favourable season. But while the Seljuq peril was growing apace, he preferred to divert his

strength towards Hindustan in a useless emulation of his father's achievements, who, with a wisdom and a generalship denied to his son, had struck simultaneously in east and west. We will first describe the comparatively prosaic events of the Punjab.

The peculiar position of the Indian province had induced Mahmud to take the extraordinary step of separating its civil and military authorities. All administrative affairs were placed in the hands of Abul Hasan Ali, known as Qazi Shirazi, a man of commonplace capacity whom the Sultan in one of his humours had thought of pitting against the august dignity of the great Khwaja, while Ali Ariyaruk, a Turkish general of remarkable dash and courage, was appointed Commander-in-Chief. The Qazi and the general were independent of each other and in direct subordination to Ghaznin. To keep them both in check Bul Kasim bul Hakam was appointed superintendent of the news-carriers and his duty was to report everything important to Ghaznin. This division of power was intended to keep the province in check by preventing the concentration of authority in a single hand, while by the appointment of a commander, whose sole business was to wage war against the *Thakurs* (Rais), Mahmud sought to make the plunder of Hindustan a permanent affair. The plan miscarried. Ariyaruk bore down all opposition and made himself supreme; the Qazi in retaliation dressed himself in military clothes but was relegated to a secondary position. The soft words of the Khwaja, however, succeeded in alluring Ariyaruk to Balkh

where he was arrested and thrown into prison (March 1031).

The instructions of the Khwaja to the new Commander-in-Chief, Ahmad Nialtigin, could leave him in no doubt that cordial co-operation between him and the Qazi would be looked upon with suspicion at Ghaznin. "This self-sufficient fellow of Shiraz wishes the generals to be under his command. You must not say anything to any person respecting revenue or political matters, but you must perform all the duties of a commander, so that the fellow may not be able to put his hand on your sinews and drag you down." On Nialtigin's arrival at Lahore the strife between the civil and military authorities recommenced. The Qazi complained of the semi-regal state which Nialtigin was keeping up, of his Turkoman slaves and his possible designs. But the Khwaja supported Nialtigin, and the general in high spirits led a campaign into Hindustan. Marching with a rapidity he had learnt from his master, he crossed the Jamna and the Ganges and appeared unexpectedly before Benares. It would have been dangerous to remain long in the city, but he succeeded in holding it from morning to mid-day during which short interval the markets of drapers, jewellers and perfumers were plundered, 'though it was impossible to do more.' The Qazi found his opportunity. He sent confidential reports to Ghaznin of the immense wealth Nialtigin had obtained and withheld from the Sultan. "What his intentions are nobody knows but he calls himself a son of Mahmud." Fear or ambition actually incited Nialtigin to treason, and on

returning to Lahore he besieged the Qazi in the fort of Mandkakar. It was a bid for independence. The Sultan consulted his high officers but none of them was inclined to lead a campaign to India in the heat and the rain (July 1033). "When one runs away from Ahmad Nialtigin there cannot be much honour left," the minister of war remarked, "but the general sent against him will have enough to do for there is a strong force at Lahore." Ashamed of the pusillanimity of his colleagues a Hindu general stepped forward and offered his services. They were gratefully accepted by the Sultan.

The career of Tilak, the Hindu, shows the rapidity with which Hindus and Mussalmans were both forgetting their religious differences in the service of a common king and the superbly oriental feeling of loyalty to the salt. Though the son of a barber, he was of handsome appearance, had studied 'dissimulation, amours and witchcraft' in Kashmir and wrote excellent Hindi and Persian. He had first entered the service of Qazi Shirazi but left it for the better prospects offered by the Khwaja, to whom he acted as secretary and interpreter and was entrusted with the most delicate affairs. Even the Khwaja's fall did him no harm for Mahmud wanted clever and energetic young men and Tilak's fortune kept on improving. Soyand Rai, the general of the Indian troops, took the wrong side on the succession question, and when he was slain in the skirmish against Ayaz, Masud appointed Tilak to the vacant post. Thus he obtained 'the name of a man.' "Kettle-drums were beaten in his quarters according to the

custom of Hindu chiefs and banners with gilded tops were granted." He had an army under his command, the tent and umbrella of a Ghaznavide general, and sat in the charmed circle of the Sultan's confidential officers. "Wise men do not wonder at such facts," says the reflective Baihaki, "because nobody is born great—men became such. This Tilak had excellent qualities and all the time he lived he sustained no injury on account of being the son of a barber."

Tilak drew up his plan of campaign and as soon as it was sanctioned by the Sultan, hastened against the rebel. Nialtigin was unable to hold Lahore and fled towards the desert and Tilak followed close on his heels with an army consisting mostly of Hindus. He set a price of 500,000 *dirhams* on Nialtigin's head, cut off the right hand of his Mussalman supporters whenever they fell into his clutches and promised a pardon to all who would desert the fugitive. This policy had the result desired. Nialtigin was defeated in battle and his Turkoman soldiers came over to Tilak in a body. 'The span of Ahmad's life was narrowed, his men deserted and at last matters reached so far that the Jats and every kind of infidel joined in the pursuit.' He was ultimately slain by the Jats while attempting to cross the Indus. Masud abolished the plan of two independent jurisdictions in the Punjab and assigned the government to his son, Prince Majdud, with supreme command of civil as well as military affairs. Nevertheless, the province remained in a state of turmoil and disorder. Ghaznavide garrisons held the towns: Hinduism and freedom reigned supreme on the country side.

ashamed of his Indian expedition and promised to advance against them in the coming summer. The Ghaznavide-Seljuq contest was rapidly drawing to a head.

"The rustic, perhaps the wisest, portion of the Turkomans," says Gibbon, "continued to dwell in the tents of their ancestors, while the Turks of the court and the city were refined by business and softened by pleasure." No love existed between the two sections of the race. The civilised Turkish population of the great cities of Turkestan and the Turkish peasants, who had learnt the value of agriculture, found the ways of their untamed brethren intolerable. For two centuries the chiefs of Mawaraun Nahr had acted as the frontier outposts against the barbaric Tatars. But the rise of the Ghaznavide Empire had greatly weakened their strength and it was impossible for them to discharge their former function with efficiency. The remnant of the Seljuq tribes left in Mawaraun Nahr was intensely hated by the neighbouring chiefs, whose territories they constantly raided. The sons of Ali Tigin, who had re-established the power of their family over Samarkand and Bokhara, refused to tolerate them, and the ruler of Jund, named Shah, for whom they had an innate enmity, made a sudden raid on their wandering camp, and with a double portion of their vindictive animosity, slew eight thousand of their males at a single stroke while seven hundred men, who escaped his wrath, fled to the other side of the Oxus. But in 1031 Yusuf Qadr Khan of Kashghar died and in the following year Altuntash, the Ghaznavide

general whom Mahmud had appointed governor of Khwarazm, was ordered by Masud to advance against Ali Tigin's sons and in a fierce battle, which cost him his life, he crushed their army and deprived them of Bokhara. Altuntash's son, Harun, whom Masud appointed to his father's post, repaid the kindness by treason and soon met his punishment. The result of these events was to remove every power that might have prevented the march of Tatar tribes from Eastern Turkestan across Mawaraun Nahr to the tempting fields of Persia. The officers of the empire proved totally incapable of either exterminating or subduing the migratory hordes that had crossed the Oxus. They had no settled habitation and it was impossible to crush them in battle. They dispersed and re-united with remarkable ease. And yet it is easy to imagine what an unexpected raid of the Tatar shepherds, who came burning and plundering, meant to a population accustomed to law and order.

The leadership of the immigrants naturally fell to the Seljuqs, and in 1036 three chiefs of the tribe, tired of the continuous conflict and hard-pressed for land, sent a petition to the Sultan asking for the districts of Nisa and Farawah, the land between the mountains on the north-west of Khorasan, the Oxus and the desert of Kara-Kum, to be granted to them as pasture. The humble petition signed by Beghu, brother of Israel bin Seljuq, and Beghu's two nephews, Tugril and Daud, concluded with a desperate threat, 'because they had no place on earth and none remained to them.' Masud bitterly complained of his father's bringing the camel-drivers into

the empire, and while beguiling the Seljuqs with soft words sent a force of 15,000 against them. Begtaghdi, the Ghaznavide general, defeated the Seljuqs after a stubborn battle, but when his men had dispersed in search of plunder, they returned from the mountain defiles and practically annihilated his army. There was no alternative but to concede the Seljuq demands; but their ambitions expanded with their success, and they began to aspire for the cities of Merv and Sarakhs situated on the frontier of their territory and even for the whole of Khorasan. But Masud, when he should have concentrated his forces on the southern side of the Khorasan hills, preferred the Pyrrhic victory over the Hindus of Hansi; and during his absence in 1036-1037 the plunder of Taliqan and Fariyab enabled the Seljuqs to organise their strength, and placed them in a position to challenge Masud's power in northern Persia.

In the spring of 1037 Subashi, governor of Khorasan, was ordered by Masud to proceed against the Seljuqs. He protested that he was too weak, but the Sultan insisted on his order being obeyed, and the reluctant governor led his troops to the expected defeat. At one blow Sarakhs, Merv and the whole of Khorasan came into the hands of the Seljuqs. Tughril was crowned king at Naishapur. A permanent peace between Masud and the Seljuqs was now impossible and a victory gained by Masud at Sarakhs in the following year only delayed the last stage of the contest.

In the summer of 1040 the Seljuqs collected round Sarakhs, and Masud, though he had made no

preparations, resolved to march against them. A terrible famine was raging and his advisers requested him to postpone the campaign. Masud refused to listen. The Seljuqs retreated as he advanced and concentrated their forces at Merv. But Masud's army became more disorganised at every stage. Grain had to be brought from distant places; the heat was unbearable; the enemy had filled up the wells and harassed the Ghaznavides on every side. Most of the men were unhorsed; no discipline or order remained; and, finally, at Dandaniqan, near Merv, Masud was surrounded by the Seljuqs and had to offer battle. His generals disgraced themselves by treason and flight and the men followed the example of their officers. "The Turkish troops went one way, and the Indians another, and neither Arabs nor Kurds could be distinguished." Only the royal body-guard remained round the Sultan who surprised friend and foe by his valour and strength, and, spear in hand, struck down all who came within the reach of his arms. But the field was irretrievably lost. "I saw Prince Maudud, son of the Sultan," says the historian, "galloping here and there, and endeavouring to rally his men, but no one gave ear to him for every one was for himself." The Sultan managed to extricate himself and reached his capital fearfully shaken and terrorised. The Empire of Ghaznin was no more.

The officers who had deserted the Sultan on the battlefield were imprisoned. Prince Maudud was despatched with an army to Balkh but Masud himself was so afraid of the Seljuqs that he dared not remain at Ghaznin. He sent Majdud to Multan

and ordered Prince Izad-yar to hold the Afghans in check, and then with the royal harem and the choicest treasures of Sultan Mahmud loaded on three hundred camels, he started for Lahore. Every one advised the Sultan against the step. His desertion of the capital would throw everything into anarchy and disorder. The journey itself was full of danger. "I have no very high opinion of the fidelity of the Hindus," the *wazir* Khwaja Mohammad bin Abdus Samad inquired, "and what confidence has my lord in his other servants, that he should show his treasures to them in the desert?" But misfortune had only increased Masud's obstinacy, and he caustically accused his officers of treason. At the pass of Marigalah the *wazir's* ominous words were fulfilled. A number of Turkish and Hindu slaves plundered a part of the royal treasure; and seeing that their crime would not be pardoned by Masud, they besieged him in the inn where he was staying and placed his brother, the blind Mohammad, on the throne. Masud was captured and sent to the fort of Giri where he was soon after put to death.

Placed on the throne after nine years of imprisonment, the blind Mohammad contented himself with dry bread while the affairs were directed by his son, Ahmad, who was reputed to be mad. But Maudud gave short shrift to his father's murderers. He hurried from Balkh to Ghaznin and thence marched towards the Indus. Mohammad's army, which had come forward to meet him, was defeated at Nagrahar, and Mohammad and his sons were captured and slain on the spot (1041). Maudud built an inn

and a village on the site of his victory, which he named Fathabad, and returned to Ghaznin with his father's coffin. But the battle of Nagrahar had not placed the Punjab in his hands. His brother, Majdud, whom the late Sultan had appointed governor of Multan, lost no time in consolidating his power; and with the help of the famous Ayaz, he captured Lahore and established his government from the Indus to Hansi and Thaneswar. Maudud marched on Lahore in 1042 but Majdud arrived just in time to save it. A critical battle was imminent and Maudud's *amirs* began to waver. But on the morning of the Eid of Sacrifice Majdud was found dead in his tent; a few days later Ayaz also died: and the Punjab passed into Maudud's hands without a battle. But further troubles were yet in store.

It was not to be expected that the Hindu Rais would fail to take advantage of the troubles of their enemy, now that the Seljuqs had made their task so easy. The Empire of Ghaznin, shrunk to the dimensions of a little kingdom, was torn by civil dissensions and in a perpetual danger of being swallowed up by its western neighbours. Maudud was in no condition to defend his Indian possessions; and the Rais of the Punjab and other lands, 'whom fear of the Mussalmans had driven like foxes to the forest, again raised their heads with confident courage.' The tide turned rapidly. A Hindu Confederacy headed by the Rai of Delhi captured Hansi and Thaneswar; Ghaznavide officers were driven off from town and country; the oppressive despondency that had taken possession of the Hindu mind

disappeared; and the Rais determined to crush the prestige of the invader by a victory that would bring joy to every village of Hindustan. Of the sacred places of Hinduism which Sultan Mahmud had conquered, Nagarkot was the only one he had kept in hand. To the average Hindu mind the Muslim possession of Nagarkot symbolised the conquest of religion by brute force, and it was the first duty of the Confederates to put an end to this standing insult to their creed. The army of triumphant Hinduism marched to the foot of the fort and laid siege to it with all the sincerity of faith. The Muslim garrison prepared to resist, but its appeals for help to the *amirs* of Lahore went unheeded and it had no alternative but to capitulate on terms that saved its life and honour. A new idol was placed on the throne. The news spread through all Hindustan. Hindu pilgrims were jubilant and once more came to visit it in crowds. The market of idolatry was busier than ever. Islam had become a losing cause and it seemed as if another decisive blow would drive it away from the land. The Ghaznavide *amirs* of Lahore, busy in fighting each other, had forgotten their allegiace to Maudud and turned a deaf ear to the prayers of the garrison of Nagarkot. But when they heard that ten thousand Hindu cavalry supported by a large infantry was marching against them, they at last awoke to the insecurity of their position, and taking an oath of loyalty to Maudud, collected their forces with a determination to defend their city to the last. The Hindu army retired without pressing the siege. Thus Lahore and the large

towns west of the Ravi were saved. Over the rest of the country Hinduism soon forgot the Mussalmans. Such traces of Islam as Mahmud may have left in India were simply swept off. On the other hand, the Hindus learnt no lessons from their adversity. No national government arose to end the civil wars of Aryavarta and after a century and a half Shahabuddin Ghori found the Hindu Rais as disunited as ever.

The later history of the kingdom of Ghaznin need not detain us for long. Its petty princes were content to eke out a humble existence under the shadow of the Seljuq empire; its unending palace intrigues were a source of derision to its enemies and of despair to its friends. Sultan Maudud died in December 1049 and his son, Masud II, a child of four years, was overthrown by Maudud's brother, Abul Hasan Ali, who in his turn was defeated by Abdur Rashid, a son of Sultan Mahmud, in 1051. In 1054 Abdur Rashid was put to death by his general Tughril, the traitor, but the usurper was slain before he had occupied the throne for forty days. Next, Farrukhzad, son of Masud, brought out of prison, reigned for seven years (1052-1059), while his brother and successor Sultan Raziuddin Ibrahim, a pious king, was blessed with a long reign of over forty years which came to an end in 1099. He was blessed also with thirty-six sons and forty daughters, and the latter, for want of suitable princes, were married to Saiyids and pious scholars. Sultan Ibrahim is credited with two Indian expeditions of which he led the second in person (1079-1080). Ajodhan, the

present Patan of Shaikh Farid of Shakarganj, was reached and marching thence the Sultan captured the fort of Rupar, situated on a hill with a river on one side and a thorny forest full of snakes on the other. Still more poetic was the conquest of Darah, a town of Khorasan colonists, exiled from Persia to India by the Afrasiyab of *Shah Namah*. "They worshipped idols and passed their lives in sin," but their city was considered impregnable and consequently the Rais of India never succeeded in plundering the foreigners in their midst. But Ibrahim cut his way through the thick forest that surrounded Darah and reduced it by force. Apart from this somewhat mythic exploit, Sultan Ibrahim was a sane and sensible man, who never forgot the serious limitations of his power and secured for his subjects a long period of uninterrupted peace.

Ibrahim's son, Alauddin Masud, married a sister of the Seljuq Emperor, Sultan Sanjar, and died after a peaceful reign of sixteen years in 1115. His son, Arsalan Shah, signalised his accession by putting his brothers to death. Only one of them, Bahram Shah, succeeded in escaping to his uncle, Sanjar, who drove out Arsalan and placed Bahram on the throne. But Arsalan returned and besieged Bahram and Sanjar once more marched to Ghaznin (1117). Arsalan was captured and a year later put to death. Muizzuddin Bahram Shah was a magnificent king. He twice defeated the governor of the Punjab, Mohammad Bahalim. Shaikh Nizami dedicated the *Makhzanul Asrar* to him and the *Kalila and Dimna* was translated from Arabic into Persian during his reign. But

a quarrel with the chiefs of Ghor led to the sack of Ghaznin and Sultan Bahram's reign of forty-one years ended in disgrace and ruin (1152).

Meanwhile, like all things mortal the empire of the Seljuqs had been progressing through its career of expansion, consolidation and decay. The battle of Dandaniqan had placed the Persian provinces of the Ghaznavide empire in their hands. Sultan Tughril (1039-1063), the first Emperor of the dynasty, fixed his capital at Ray and assigned Khorasan to his brother Daud Jafar (Chaghri) Beg. The ease with which the conquered people reconciled themselves to the new dynasty is a credit at once to the moral character of the House of Seljuq and the captivating power of civilization. The new rulers threw off their barbaric ways and conformed to the time-honoured traditions of the Persian monarchy; the military vigour of the Turk combined with the administrative genius of the Persian to establish an empire that came into contact and conflict with the anti-Caliphs of Egypt and the Byzantine empire in the west and the infidels of Cathay in the east; and in the century of peace that followed no one regretted the fall of the Ghaznavide administration. "It would be superfluous," says Gibbon, "to praise the valour of a Turk, and the ambition of Tughril was equal to his valour. In his own dominions Tughril was the father of his soldiers and people; by a firm and equal administration Persia was relieved from the evils of anarchy; and the same hands which had been embrued in blood became the guardians of justice and the public peace." The kings of Ghaznin were

allowed to eke out their years of inglorious existence but the Mussalmans and Christians of Iraq and Asia Minor felt the hand of 'the Conquering Turk.' Azarbaijan was annexed to the empire; the power of the Buwaihids, which Mahmud had crushed in Isfahan and Ray, was finally annihilated in Bagdad and the Commander of the Faithful, relieved from the vexations to which he had been exposed by the presence and poverty of the Persian dynasty, bestowed on Tughril the titles of 'Sultanud Doulah' and 'Yamin-i Amirul Mominin.' A Seljuq general, I-tsiz, over-ran Syria and even reached the Nile, while the Byzantine empire felt the vigour of the Turkish troops across a frontier of six hundred miles from Tauras to Erzerum. The contest was, however, undecided when Tughril died at the age of seventy-two.

Alp Arsalan (1063-1072), son of Daud, who succeeded to the empire of his uncle after a brief period of civil wars, continued the eastern conquests of Tughril. Armenia and Georgia were annexed and three years (1068-1071) of war decided the fate of the Asiatic possessions of Constantinople. The initiative was taken by the Emperor, Romanus Diogenese, who advanced with a hundred thousand soldiers and an auxiliary force of disorderly allies. After three well-fought campaigns the Turks were driven beyond the Euphrates and when the Sultan advanced against him with forty thousand men, the Emperor contemptuously ordered the barbarian to cede the palace and city of Ray as the condition of peace. But the Sultan's "rapid and skilful evolutions distressed and

dismayed the superior numbers of the Greeks," and at the battle of Mulazgrid (Madikerb) the Turkish veterans crushed the power of their vain and disorganised opponents beyond the possibility of redemption. Romanus Diogenese, brought a captive to the court, was treated with that superb generosity which Alp Arsalan showed his fallen enemies. Having accomplished his western mission, the Sultan marched eastward for the conquest of Mawaraun Nahr. But an assassin's dagger cut short the Sultan's life after he had crossed the Oxus and brought his conquering career to an untimely end after a reign of nine years and a half.

The reign of Alp Arsalan's son, Malik Shah, (1072-1092) was a period of prosperity and peace, and shows the Seljuq empire at its best. The unrealised scheme of his father was accomplished by the conquest of Mawaraun Nahr and Malik Shah's *Khutba* was read beyond the Jaxartes at Kashghar. But during the rest of his reign the Sultan kept perambulating his extensive empire and supervising its civil administration so that "few departed from his *diwan* without reward and none without justice." The calendar which had fallen into disorder was reformed by a committee of mathematicians (including the astronomer-poet, Omar Khayyam), who inaugurated the Jalali era of Malik Shah, "a computation of time, which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style." With the names of Alp Arsalan and Malik Shah is intimately associated the name of their great minister, Nizamul Mulk, author of the *Siyasat*

Namah,(43) and one of the most famous *wazirs* of the east. Deeply learned in all the political wisdom of the day, a patron of literature and art to whom the 'Nizamiah' University of Bagdad owed its establishment, Nizamul Mulk served the Seljuq dynasty with zeal and devotion for thity years and won for it the loyalty of its subjects and the grateful remembrance of posterity. But the influence of the queen, Turkan Khatun, who wished to secure the succession of her son, Mahmud, alienated the Sultan's mind from him, and at the age of ninety-three years the venerable statesman was 'dismissed by his master, accused by his enemies, and murdered by a fanatic.' Malik Shah himself died in the following month.

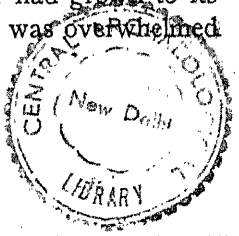
Malik Shah's two sons, Barkiyaruk (1092-1104) and Mohammad (1104-1117), were succeeded by their brother, Sanjar (1117-1157), 'a great, dignified and mighty monarch,' under whom affairs again came back to 'the highway of legality and the beaten track of equity and justice,' from which they had been unhappily deflected during the reigns of his predecessors. Irak, Khorasan and Mawaraun Nahr increased in population and prosperity; the empire was more extensive than it had been ever before. Nevertheless, Sanjar's long reign was a period of disintegration and decay. Provincial governors (*atabaks*) began to aspire for independence; a new race of Turkomans poured across the Jaxartes; and by slow degrees the

(43) The *Siyasat Namah* is sometimes supposed to be a treatise on political science, but it is really a book on political trickery and a violent pamphlet against the 'heretics.' Its historical value is very great.

foundations of the empire were sapped. Sanjar struggled valiantly against the rising deluge and won seventeen out of the nineteen great battles he is said to have fought. But he did not know how to take advantage of his successes, and his defeats were, consequently, more important than his victories. In 1141 a number of Kara-Khata-i tribes, who had migrated into Mawaraun Nahr, rebelled against the empire. Sanjar was defeated near Samarkand and the whole of Mawaraun Nahr passed into infidel hands. Another body of emigrants, the Ghazz Turks, defeated and captured the Sultan in 1153 and carried him about as a captive in their camp for three years. When the Sultan at last escaped to his capital, the empire had ceased to exist. Khorasan had been devastated by the Ghazz; the *atabaks* had thrown off their allegiance to the central power; and the last of the "Great Seljuqs" closed his eyes after a strenuous life of seventy-two years spent in an unsuccessful defence of the work of his ancestors and the civilisation they had inherited.

Under the protection of the Seljuq dynasty Persian civilisation reached a height which it has never since attained. The middle of the twelfth century witnessed the final extinction of the kingdom of Ghaznin and the collapse of the Seljuqian empire. The kingdoms of Khwarazm and Ghor rose on the ground thus left vacant, but neither had grown to its full stature when the Muslim world was overwhelmed by the Mongol barbarians.

FINIS



BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE DESECRATED BONES AND OTHER STORIES

(Published by the Oxford University Press, B. I. Building, Nicol Road, Bombay, and Messrs. Luzac & Co., near British Museum, London. Price Rs. 4-8).

Some Press Reviews.

The Times Literary Supplement, London, July 1, 1926.

'The three stories in the volume which takes its title from the first, *The Desecrated Bones* (Luzac, 6s. net), are outwardly mere experiments in the supernatural. In each of them the action turns on the influence exerted on human affairs by a ghost apparition. Actually, however, the author, Mr. Muhammad Habib, uses the supernatural element in his tales for the purpose of illustrating one of the main aspects of Indian philosophy. There is nothing unduly didactic in his method—his ghosts have remarkable human sympathies, and the sight of them always fetches the appropriate physical thrill, but he is at pains to justify his taste for the terrors of the spirit. The ghost of each story is not so much a psychic phenomenon as an agent of morality; its function is not merely to frighten and bewilder, but to create faith in the redemption of the spirit by bodily suffering. In each

case it appears to a man whose manner of life has been reckless and unprincipled; and the twist given to character by its appearance is the starting point of moral regeneration. The first of the stories seems to be based on an Indian legend of the early fourteenth century. Malik Hizabruddin, a cruel, haughty warrior, encounters a ghost in which he recognises the image of a man he has murdered, experiences the sensation of fear for the first time in his life, slowly acquires consciousness of sin, and blesses the justice that is not of this earth before he dies. The psychology of the tale has an impressive sobriety; the concrete, everyday obstacles which encumber the path of salvation are cleared by nothing more magical than by the warrior's own dormant religious sense. In *Spectre and Skeleton,* a dying man requests a friend to take care of his wife after his death, pleading with him, however, not to marry her. The marriage having taken place, the dead man's ghost passes judgment on the living; it comes to the woman as a bridegroom, kisses her feet and draws the blood from her body. *The Spider's Web,* which is apparently also based on a legend, is rather more complicated than the other two stories. Here again it is the ghost's business to give strength to suffer the penalties of sin and to embrace redemption.

In none of the stories does the philosophy obtrude on the course of the narrative. The dramatic part conscience plays in them enriches the human associations of the spectral theme and gives personal force to the general philosophic problem of sin. Mr. Habib's insight into character is deep and unosten-

tatious. His English, too, except for a few curiously formal little phrases here and there, is vigorous and precise.'

The Pioneer, Allahabad.

'One of the hardest tasks of an author is to find a suitable title for his book, and then, more often than not, the title is sadly inappropriate, in that it conveys so little to the intending reader of what the book really contains. Such a charge, however, can scarcely be laid at the door of Mr. Mohammad Habib, for, in his excellently written little book of some 185 pages, the reader is left in no doubt as to what to expect. *The Desecrated Bones and Other Stories* is, to say the least, fascinatingly gruesome, but it is the gruesomeness of the realities of the India of long ago, in the far away days when the Mahomedan invasion spread over Northern India and Akbar the Great ruled.

'The book is not a history, nor is it a connected narrative of any particular period of history. It is simply a collection of three tales, all of which might have begun with the old phrase so dear and familiar to us in childhood days: "Once upon a time." The only difference is that the old "once upon a time" stories usually saw that their heroes and heroines "lived happily ever afterwards" before they made their farewell to their readers. Mr. Habib, however, does not give us "fairy" stories, but interprets life as it was in those distant days, not life as we would like it to have been; hence not one of his tales ends happily. They are none the less readable.

'It is interesting to note how the author, true to historical facts, brings out the religious tolerance of the great Akbar in his story entitled *The Spider's Web*: "Do not take it ill, Father Pereira. The Emperor has no desire to injure the religious susceptibilities of his Christian guest. Different peoples have different faiths. For each of us the faith of our forefathers is the best. It does not matter whether we are Hindus, Mussalmans, or Christians; provided we are true to our faith, we shall be saved. You have to live up to your creed and I to mine."

'The book is realistic and will hold the interest of the reader. Little more need be said, save that Mr. Habib writes with a light pen, is rather staccato in style, has a strong imagination, and appears to succeed in what he sets out to do.'

The Statesman, Calcutta, January 10, 1926.

'These are three fairly long stories of Mohammedan life in India. We do not know who Mr. Habib is, but he writes with skill and power; there is no sign in his easy vigour that English is an unfamiliar medium. The tales are full of tragedy and mystery, fascinating in their horrors, and worked out with dramatic effect. One piece of over-straining for effect we have noticed. Akbar with a kick "sent Himmat's huge body rolling like a ball" as he lay unconscious on the ground. Not even an Emperor's kick has that effect.'

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